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NEW STATESMAN

Crick on Orwell

Who is killing the Lebanon?

Barbara Castle on staying in Europe

WAR GAMES

How the Home Office rigged 'World War III'

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'Normally, I say "no" '

THE DAY of action on 22 September next week in support of the NHS workers will give the right-wing press and most political commentators a predictable excuse to trot out more anti-union propaganda. If the response is weak there will be much trumpeting that radical trade union leaders are out of touch with their members. If the response is strong there will be overblown outrage that radical trade union leaders (encouraged rather against past form by Mr James Callaghan) have led their members into organised and deliberate law-breaking.

Is there a moral right in a democratic society to break the law or must we resign our consciences to the legislators? The electricians of Fleet Street, the women of Greenham Common, the residents of Brixton all raise the issue in direct terms and it will be raised on 22 September. Without going to the farfetched extreme of Mr Conor Cruise O'Brien's suggestion in last week's *Observer* that the civil rights movement's refusal to obey a march in Londonderry in October 1978 opened the floodgates to the IRA and murder, illegal acts clearly set precedents for others. If the TUC can legitimately encourage trade unionists to break the Employment Acts, might not the CBI legitimately encourage employers to flout some future Labour government's legislation for industrial democracy?

In the first place, there is a moral right to ignore the law when that law does not command a sufficient degree of general consent. It is naive to argue that in a political system based on elected government and universal suffrage the *only* permissible response to bad legislation is to work through the political system for repeal. Legitimate legislation in a democracy requires a substantial degree of consent on the part of society. The Heath Industrial Relations Act did not have such consent and thus was unworkable.

There is also a moral right to break the law in order to force attention to an issue. As Bertrand Russell argued in early CND days:

> Long and frustrating experience has proved to those among us who have endeavoured to make unpleasant facts known that orthodox methods alone are not sufficient. By means of civil disobedience, a certain kind of publicity becomes possible and many people are roused to inquire into questions which they had been willing to ignore.

Governments (including Labour governments) have a chronic tendency to secrecy and deception. (The extension of our Polaris nuclear weapons by the last Labour government was a political scandal because it broke a manifesto pledge to the contrary. But it was a moral scandal because it was done in secret.) Governments also have a tendency to undermine the institutions of democracy. (Most notably they tamper with the flow of a free press.) Both tendencies should be resisted. To protest against them and to use civil disobedience is quite justified. The women of Greenham Common do not think their action will coerce the US military into abandoning cruise: their motive is publicity and expression of strongly felt conviction for which they are prepared to accept arrest. As Martin Luther King once argued from a Birmingham, Alabama jail, an individual who breaks an unjust law (or protests against an immoral policy) and then accepts the penalty by staying in jail to 'arouse the conscience of the community is, in reality expressing the very highest respect of the law'.

It is perfectly possible that trade union leaders will not be massively supported by their members next week. It is perfectly possible that Mrs Thatcher will be unmoved. But trade unionists have the right to take action to express their principles and to face the consequences. No-one can remove from a citizen the right to go to jail. □

War without end

THE LARGE BOMB explosion in Beirut ought to make even Prime Minister Begin see that his Middle East policy is not and cannot lead to stability. Mr Bashir Gemayel was widely regarded as the Israeli-sponsored candidate to restore order in the Lebanon, to give security on the northern border after the military defeat of the PLO. It is not clear who killed him. Phalangists, Syrians and the PLO all had motives. But it is also possible that Israeli factions saw further destabilisation of Lebanon as a convenient cover to take control of West Beirut and to ignore American pleas for restraint. At least the policy that the present Isreali government is pursuing implies inevitably greater and greater military and political expansionism beyond existing borders, in order to chase the illusion of national security in a hostile environment.

Perhaps the decision by the Pope this week to receive Mr Yasser Arafat will finally make even Begin see that his Middle East policy has strengthened the political standing of the PLO. The Roman Catholic church, while stopping short of formal recognition and while not taking sides in the Arab-Israel dispute, has in effect recognised the rights of the Palestinians. And recognised that the PLO is their legitimate representation. That cannot have been part of the Israeli plan. □

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Patrick Wintour on planning

Labour leaves Treasury well alone

PRESS COVERAGE of last week's TUC Congress concentrated on the largely meaningless debate between free collective bargainers and the advocates of incomes policy. The debate that followed on Economic Planning and Industrial Democracy, the TUC-Labour Party Liaison Committee discussion document, should have been far more important since it is intended to be the cornerstone of Labour's plan for economic revival. Instead only four delegates spoke and the document was passed unanimously – a sure sign that no-one was listening. The document had, in its early stages, shown a new recognition of the importance of the instruments of change and of the deadening role the Treasury has played.

In the document's short life, the radical proposals to dismantle the Treasury's powers and transfer them to a new Planning Ministry have already been beaten off by Shadow ministers John Smith and Peter Shore. In the final draft presented to Congress last week, a new Department of Planning is still proposed but with greatly weakened powers. Confidential early drafts had relegated the Treasury to the status of 'Ministry of Finance responsible for revenue gathering and certain financial planning'. It gave the Planning Department the job of shaping the size of public expenditure programmes in accordance with the objective of achieving full employment. The Department would have close links with the tripartite National Planning Council on which the unions would have a major role. The early draft also specified that the Bank of England's activities 'would have to be integrated within and made subordinate to the return to full employment'.

By the penultimate draft, control over public expenditure by a Planning Department appeared as merely one option. Control by the Treasury had reappeared as the other. It was thought the two options would be kept in the document and a decision left until after the consultation. But issue of Treasury control led to a lengthy argument at a special meeting of the TUC/Labour Party liaison committee, summoned to discuss the final draft at the General and Municipal Workers' Union college near Oxford. There it was agreed that Judith Hart, chairwoman of the Party, Stan Orme, industry spokesman and Peter Shore, Shadow Chancellor, should be left to settle the issue. In the final draft agreed by the trio it is baldly stated in a new paragraph 77 that 'the Treasury would continue to exercise public expenditure responsibility' about 'allocations of annual expenditure to each department and ministry.' The Planning Department should prepare only 'the basic medium-term economic projection and proposals about expenditure priorities.'

The fact that paragraph 77 was only inserted at the last moment to mollify Peter Shore is underlined by the fact that elsewhere in the final document the earlier radical view of public expenditure is still offered. Thus:

> It is of little use having long-term employment and growth targets if the government's short-term public expenditure and taxation decisions run against those targets.

The institutional means of changing this target have been dropped; the Treasury with its close links to the bastions of financial orthodoxy still rules.

Despite the vote in favour of free collective bargaining at Congress, Labour leaders plan to continue with the regional discussion conferences on the basis of the existing liaison committee document. In a critique of 'the corporatist outlook' of the document, a group of Trades Councils have argued that the consultative process should not be based on large regional conferences, but on industrial conferences involving Combine Committees and shop stewards. Enthusiasm for the proposals among the union movement is a precondition, the trades councils argue, for its success. □

Francis Wheen on the CPGB

Mick the Knife

IN AN uncharacteristic burst of open government, the Communist Party has publicly reprimanded one of its leading officials, Mick Costello, who had in turn publicly criticised one of the party's publications, *Marxism Today*, which had in turn attacked some features of modern trade unionism.

This strange and almost unprecedented sequence of events marks the resumption of the struggle within the party between the unreconstructed members – Stalinists, hard-liners, call them what you will – and the slightly more free-thinking 'Eurocommunists'. The hard-liners tend to believe that the Soviet Union and the British labour movement may both have their faults, but that it is not the place of the Communist Party to point them out. This faction is particularly strong in the party's industrial department (which is run by Mick Costello) and the management of the *Morning Star*. Many of the hard-liners have been particularly irked in the past couple of years by the increased circulation of *Marxism Today*, which is seen as the mouthpiece for the 'trendy' attitudes of the Eurocommunists, compared with the continued decline of the *Morning Star*.

The current issue of *Marxism Today* contains a long article on the difficulties facing British trade unions. It says, among other things, that 'the move towards company bargaining with shop steward participation has gained a new clientele for the British Rail breakfast as shopfloor representatives have sat cheek by jowl with managers on their way to London'. These trade unionists were part of 'a new working-class elite which has the opportunity (and too often takes it) of sharing in the expense account syndrome: the franchise of perks and fiddles has been widened'.

On 26 August the *Morning Star* ran a front-page article in which Mick Costello described the piece in *Marxism Today* as 'a gross slander'. He said that *Marxism Today* was helping the Tories 'to undermine the self-confidence of the working class'.

A fortnight later, on 7 September, the *Morning Star* renewed its attack. This time the object of its hostility was an article in the *Guardian* by Beatrix Campbell which had criticised trade unions' treatment of women. Beatrix Campbell was accused by an official of AUEW-TASS of helping 'the anti-trade union camp of Thatcher and Tebbit'. The *Morning Star* decided not to allow Ms Campbell an equivalent right of reply.

Last Sunday the tables were turned. The party's executive held a long discussion about Mick Costello's remarks on *Marxism Today* and then issued a statement which was prominently published on the front page of Monday's *Morning Star*. While reaffirming its support for the shop stewards' movement, and delivering a gentle rap on the knuckles to the editor of *Marxism Today*, the executive nevertheless concluded that *Marxism Today*'s article was not 'a gross slander'; nor was its publication in the Tories' interests. 'The executive committee therefore does not support these characterisations of the article in the personal statement issued by the national industrial organiser of the party [Mick Costello] and published in the *Morning Star*.' It also decided Beatrix Campbell should be able to reply, at the same length, to the attack on her.

Costello was rather unforthcoming when asked this week about his public rebuff: 'I cannot comment on any part of the statement on its own, because we take the statement as a whole.' He added, winningly, 'I know I'm not being very helpful.' □

Jonathan Coe at the Theatre Royal

Innovative sex and violence

IF THE SAMPLE of programme excerpts selected for showing at the Fourth Channel's official launch at the Theatre Royal last Tuesday are representative, then the new service will be indistinguishable from that of the other commercial television stations.

Perhaps the Channel's marketing department which organised the jamboree thought it prudent, after months of publicity about the Channel's innovatory and 'minority' programmes, to present an image of the service which would not upset the advertisers.

But clips from films appeared to be routinely violent, the 'humour' dominated by crude sexist Australian imports, and the sports coverage depending upon cheap and violent macho imports of American football. There was nothing to show that Channel Four had seriously taken on board the arguments about representation made for years by the women's movement. Rather the opposite: the emphasis on salacious mock striptease in a dance sequence, and the parade of topless women sitting on a beach (part of a surfing feature) gave the impression that the channel had been programmed by the *Sun*.

A crude sexist import?

There were also clips which made the Channel look racist – one from a film presented poor Mexicans as violent drunks, and black culture was represented by a clip of a street performer singing.

Overall the Channel made its first appearance as the television version of Capital Radio – London's commercial radio station – all superficial gloss acting as a disguise for the advertisers' hard sell, with hints of interesting material scheduled into oblivion.

Perhaps the more radical clips were not ready. But the striking feature of the statements made by Chief Executive Jeremy Isaacs and Controller Paul Bonner was their failure to stress anything that could be called 'innovative and experimental', or even challenging, though a glance through the schedules reveals material which has the promise of being worthwhile. If the Channel's executives are not prepared now to make a public case for demanding television when will they make it? □

Jonathan Coe contd

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Sarah Lewthwaite reports

Young Libs urge control of police

A PLAN for local authorities to control police operational strategy will be debated by next week's Liberal assembly, as part of a Young Liberal motion on community policing. The motion calls for local control of all police forces, including the Metropolitan Police, with elected representatives regulating all aspects of police work, including budgets, policy, and the appointment of senior officers.

This would radically alter Liberal policy, which at present calls only for police authorities to include representatives from county district and neighbourhood councils, without spelling out areas of responsibility. A party spokesman, however, described it as 'a development of existing policy', although it seems likely that the motion will be watered down by a separate vote to remove the reference to control of operational strategy.

The motion will be sponsored by Young Liberal Chairwoman Sue Younger. Her view:

> it is only just that since the public pay for the police they should be able to control them. Local authorities deal with many matters just as controversial as police strategy – imagine the outcry, for example, if it was suggested that child custody decision should be left entirely to social workers.

The motion also calls for racist behaviour from police officers to be 'ordinarily punishable by dismissal', although an amendment, seeking to make it only a disciplinary offence, is also being proposed.

Earlier expectations of a bust-up on the party's Alliance strategy are unlikely to be fulfilled. At a recent meeting of the party's West Midland regional organisation, called 'to discuss the future, if any, of the Alliance in the West Midlands', not a single voice was raised against the Alliance in principle.

There is still unhappiness about the division of seats between the two parties, with several Liberal second-place constituencies going to the SDP. Although several Liberal associations have threatened to go it alone if the SDP refuses to give way, the Liberal leadership is apparently hoping to draw up a compromise.

In the event, however, this may provoke less emotion than the debate next Saturday on animal experiments. As one activist commented 'most Liberals would far rather be talking about dead animals than live people'. □

Steve Walker reports

The death of the guinea-pig

ANIMAL WELFARE supporters launched a campaign this week to bring pressure on all the main political parties in the run-up to the next general election. A large number of animal welfare societies have come together for the first time in order to pursue a united campaign for legislation against the many forms of animal abuse.

A National Opinion Poll* commissioned by the British Union for the Abolition of Vivisection shows clearly the increased concern among the public about the use of animals in research laboratories. Animal testing has increased as more and more products have to be tested for their consequences for human health. The poll showed that an overwhelming majority of people are opposed to the use of animals in the testing of weapons, cosmetic research, tobacco and alcohol research as well as the use of animals in acute and chronic poisoning tests. Despite the fact that breaking into research establishments and taking away animals is a criminal offence, 35 per cent of those questioned said they approved of such action.

The campaign organisers believe that all the main political parties have dodged the issue of animal welfare for so long that they are now way behind public opinion.

In a recent reply to a Parliamentary question, Home Office Minister Timothy Raison said that the government would take no action to stop the use of animals in tobacco and alcohol experiments. Similar replies have been given in relation to cosmetic testing and acute poisoning tests. □

* NOP Market Research Limited carried out a nationally representative quota sample of 2037 adults aged 15+ between 5 and 9 August 1982.

Fiona Mallon on the law

Potentially polygamous

PROPOSED changes in the law on polygamy will clarify the ambiguous status of British immigrants who marry according to Muslim customs, in their home countries.

A joint working paper published this week by the Law Commission and the Scottish Law Commissions has recommended that 'potentially polygamous' marriages should be regarded as valid in Britain.

Many immigrant men, particularly those from the Indian subcontinent, return to their native mosques to marry a local woman. Until quite recently, if the immigrant was officially domiciled in Britain, the marriage was considered invalid because the ceremony entitles the husband to take additional wives and is therefore considered 'potentially polygamous' under British law. The ruling applies even where the marriage is, in intention and actuality, monogamous.

Only immigrants domiciled in Britain fall foul of the law. Ironically if at the time of the marriage a man is still domiciled in his home country and marries four women, British law will recognise them all.

Both Law Commissions received many complaints about the racial sensitivity of the 'potential polygamy' law. Many immigrants have been humiliated to find they must remarry under an English ceremony to ensure legal protection for the women and children. A woman whose marriage is invalid, for instance, would have no legal entitlement to her husband's estate should he die intestate.

The Commissions argue that the validity of a woman's marriage to a British citizen will play an important part in applications for naturalisation when the Nationality Act 1981 comes into force. Only since 1975 has a woman whose marriage is 'potentially polygamous' been able to claim maternity benefits and only since 1976 have children born of such a marriage been considered legitimate – and then only provided neither husband nor wife knew their marriage was void under British law.

Total reform of the legislation is needed, the report says, to produce a nationally uniform and unambiguous law in which the concept of 'potential polygamy' should disappear entirely. The proposals have been welcomed by the Commission for Racial Equality. □

I WISH WE'D NEVER STOLEN IT FROM THE RESEARCH LABORATORY- IT INSISTS ON A HUNDRED CIGARETTES AND HALF A BOTTLE OF WHISKEY A DAY

Mick Hamer on McCarthy

Railroading award

THE RAILWAY unions are bitterly disappointed with Lord 'Bill' McCarthy's pay award. But the meagre award (which is tied to improved productivity) is a logical consequence of British Rail's victory in the two strikes earlier this year.

McCarthy has given the unions a 6 per cent pay rise. This is only slightly more than BR's original pay offer of 5 per cent, which was withdrawn after the National Union of Railwaymen (NUR) went on strike. Furthermore the pay rise is linked to three productivity measures left over from the 1981 pay agreement: the single staffing of trains on the Bedpan line (from St Pancras to Bedford), an experiment on driver-only operation of freight trains and unified promotion system, enabling guards to become drivers.

The stumbling block for the McCarthy compromise is the NUR's special general meeting, which will be held on October 13 and 14 in Birmingham. Over the intervening weeks the NUR branches will discuss McCarthy's report and will mandate delegates to vote for or against it. But there is little choice. If the delegates reject the compromise then their only option is some sort of industrial action to support a higher pay claim. They lost the last strike. The union is therefore in the position of having to accept the loss of guards on new commuter trains and on freight trains in return for a pay rise that is only slightly better than the offer they went on strike to improve.

The irony is that the unions started the discussion on productivity two years ago. The theory was that a deal with British Rail to improve productivity would get increased pay and enable the industry as a whole to ask the government for increased investment. This deal has now turned sour. British Rail's management still labours under the illusion that improving productivity will get more investment. It won't. Transport secretary David Howell is incapable of getting an increased investment programme through the cabinet. All that improving productivity now means is that British Rail workers will get a pay rise. But even with improved productivity these pay rises fall short of the rise in inflation. □

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PETER KELLNER, Political Editor

Why Mr Steel is more modest than he looks

NEXT WEEK the party conference season opens. For four consecutive weeks we shall be treated to the spectacle of the massed ranks of party activists in session. They will appear on our television screens in descending order of niceness: first the Liberals, then Labour, then the Conservatives, and finally the Social Democrats. It will be the first time so many party conferences will have been held in so short a time. By the time Roy Jenkins sits down at the end of his speech to the SDP faithful at Great Yarmouth on 16 October, British politics will have received more extensive exposure than at any time outside a general election.

For the Liberals at Bournemouth, opening the conference season is like singing the first song in the Eurovision Song Contest: any mark it makes at the time risks being obliterated by the acts that follow. Moreover, the Assembly agenda has been designed to minimise any aggro the leadership might suffer – or the public might enjoy – over the alliance with the SDP. Delegates are not being asked to ratify the allocation of seats to be fought by the two parties at the next general election; nor are they being invited to discuss whether, and in what circumstances, David Steel should play second fiddle to Roy Jenkins in a general election campaign. The only thing a dissatisfied delegate will be able to do on these issues is to make a fuss about the party's annual report, when it is formally presented next Tuesday morning. And, as that session is closed to the press and public, any breaking of the mould that is discussed at Bournemouth will be done behind closed doors.

How different it was last year at Llandudno. Then the Liberal leadership needed the support of the Assembly to embark on the party's alliance with the Liberals. This year's Assembly has a very different complexion. Instead of being required to do something, it is being asked to do nothing – nothing, that is, that will impair Mr Steel's freedom of action.

SUCH AN observation implies no criticism of the party leadership. It is, in a way, a commendation. For the truth of the matter is that the first year of the Alliance has helped the Liberals, compared with the SDP, more than Mr Steel could ever publicly claim.

Last autumn, when the Alliance was well ahead in the polls, a heady prospect came briefly into view – of a Liberal/SDP victory at the next general election. SDP leaders could, and did, boast that it was the formation of the SDP rather than the survival of the Liberals that had made such an outcome possible. How could the Liberals do other than cede a number of winnable seats to the SDP, and the leadership of the Alliance to Mr Jenkins?

Mr Steel's essential masterstroke has been to maintain, straight-faced, the public charade that the Alliance was in the business of offering an alternative government, while making sure that any lesser (and increasingly more likely) outcome would give the Liberals the lion's share of the Alliance pickings. Hence the importance of keeping the 50 'golden' seats in Liberal hands (those seats that the Liberals now hold, and those where they came a close second last time to the Conservatives); hence also the mounting vehemence with which Mr Steel rejects the notion of an Alliance 'leader'.

Mr Steel's interview on Tyne Tees TV's *Face the Press* last Sunday exemplifies this two-tier strategy. No, he said, there would not be an Alliance 'leader'; instead there would be 'Prime Minister in waiting'. And what would be this person's status if the Alliance didn't win? 'He would still be in waiting. I suppose', replied Mr Steel. Or, to put it another way, all bets would be off.

Mr Steel, however, can only demonstrate his success in defending the Liberals' interests within the Alliance by conceding the modesty of his own ambitions. The more he is required to insist to his supporters that the Alliance expects to win the next election, the more he appears to have given unnecessary ground to the SDP.

The Alliance tally

Date	Place	Lib Vote	Lib %	Result
27/5	**Mendip***	204	35.8	Con gain(LIB)
10/6	**Carrick***	799	46.0	Con hold
26/6	**Cleethorpes**	652	44.7	Con hold
8/7	**Ashford**	234	33.7	Con hold
5/8	**Somerset**	265	28.8	Lab hold
5/8	**Easington**	130	27.0	SDP gain(LIB)
12/8	**Cornwall***	806	43.5	LIB gain(Con)
12/8	**Restormel***	807	38.6	Con gain(Ind)
12/8	**Cleethorpes***	385	29.2	Con hold
19/8	**Kettering***	260	27.5	Con hold
19/8	**Rochdale***	1468	52.8	LIB gain(Con)
2/9	**Derby***	1669	56.4	LIB gain(Lab)
2/9	**Sunderland***	403	21.6	Lab gain(LIB)
9/9	**Merseyside***	3062	54.0	LIB gain(Lab)
9/9	**Lancaster***	582	28.0	Lab hold

Date	Place	SDP Vote	SDP %	Result
27/5	**Surrey Heath***	403	34.6	SDP gain(Con)
3/6	**Rhuddlan**	815	74.4	SDP gain(Con)
10/6	**North Beds***	657	18.2	Con hold
8/7	**Coventry***	364	13.7	Lab hold
22/7	**Newbury**	127	25.7	Con hold
22/7	**Stockport**	1127	27.8	Con hold
5/8	**Burnley***	392	22.5	Lab gain(Con)
5/8	**Easington**	177	36.7	SDP gain(Lib)
19/8	**Newark***	284	27.7	Lab gain(Con)
26/8	**Calderdale***	371	14.3	Lab hold
9/9	**Bury***	492	23.7	Lab hold
9/9	**Warrington***	819	31.1	Lab gain(Con)
9/9	**Grampian***	781	37.6	Con hold

* Seats also contested by both Con and Lab

Corrections: In our last survey (*NS* 6 August) we listed three seats in the wrong 'tally' column. Scunthorpe and Mid-Sussex were in fact contested by the Liberals (not the SDP) and Humberside by the SDP (not the Liberals). Scunthorpe was therefore a gain for the Liberals rather than for the SDP. The voting figures and percentages remain as published.

Research by Steve Walker

ANALYSIS of the latest local council by-elections confirms the validity of Mr Steel's strategic calculation that the Liberals are likely to win far more seats than the SDP at the next general election. The table on this page gives the results of elections which have taken place, or which have come to light, since our last survey at the beginning of August.

Overall, since the beginning of July, the Alliance has won fewer than one-quarter of the seats contested – 13 out of 54. Since 11 of the by-elections took place in seats previously held by the Liberals, the Alliance's performance (net gain two) has been more than a little lack-lustre.

As it is now a year since the *New Statesman* started collecting local by-election results, a comparison can be made with the same summer period leading up to last year's Liberal Assembly:

	2/7 to 10/9 1981 Seats defended	Seats won	Net change	1/7 to 9/9 1982 Seats defended	Seats won	Net change
Con	25	16	−9	25	25	0
Lab	21	16	−5	14	15	+1
Lib	5	23	+18	11	12	+1
SDP	–	8	+8	–	1	+1
Other	16	4	−12	4	1	−3

Both Labour and the Conservatives seem to have recovered, while the Alliance – and the SDP in particular – have slipped back. The Alliance's decline is real enough. In three-cornered contests last summer, Alliance candidates achieved on average 41 per cent of the vote; this summer their average has been 34 per cent. Even that overstates the Alliance rating, because of the large number of seats defended by the Liberals; and two of the biggest contests (Rochdale and Merseyside) took place in the local council equivalent of the Liberals' 'golden' hopes.

Adjusting for the over-representation of Liberal areas suggests a rough national division of party support as follows: Conservative 38 per cent; Labour 31 per cent; Alliance 29 per cent. This is, admittedly, a higher Alliance and lower Tory share than indicated by recent opinion polls; but it is still below the threshold where the Alliance would make substantial gains. Indeed, the SDP would have gained no seats at all had it not been for a curious contest in Easington, Co. Durham, where the SDP fought against local Liberals for a seat where the previous (Liberal) councillor had been forced to resign after being absent from council meetings for more than six months.

Labour's 'recovery' represents no general gain in public support. Rather, it reflects the arithmetic of Britain's electoral system at work. Last summer Labour lost eight seats to the Alliance; this summer Labour has lost only two. The difference is explained wholly by the Alliance's decline: Labour's share of national support, 31 per cent, is the same as it was last year. □

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Bad day at Hard Rock

In the first of three reports based on his forthcoming book*, DUNCAN CAMPBELL exposes the basis on which the government proposed to carry out this year's civil defence exercise, code-named HARD ROCK

WAR BETWEEN BRITAIN and the Soviet Union was due to start at 4.30am on 27 September, and become a nuclear war five days later – or would have done on paper if the Home Secretary had not been forced to cancel the 'home defence' exercise *Hard Rock*, planned for the end of this month. The enforced 'postponement' is the principal reason why the government is now planning new legal regulations to force unwilling 'nuclear free zone' councils to take part in planning and carrying out such exercises.

Hard Rock was to have been the biggest such exercise for 15 years – since 1968 when the Civil Defence Corps and all large-scale civil defence planning was abandoned. It would have been the largest, in a series of such exercises which began in 1975 with *Inside Right*. We had *Scrum Half* in 1978, and the sporting metaphors continued with *Square Leg* in 1980.

Hard Rock was to have been the centrepiece of the revived civil defence activities of the Thatcher government. But an examination of its details shows that the exercise was based on the most absurd conception of nuclear war ever to have disgraced the desk of a military planner. Previous exercises have tested the (trivial) capacity of civil defence measures against a nuclear attack at the level Britain would be likely to receive – at least 200 Metatons of nuclear fire power, or roughtly 15,000 times the power of the bomb used at Hiroshima.

In *Hard Rock*, the nuclear attack on Britain was scaled down to only 54 weapons, delivering about 48 Megatons – a quarter of levels previously assumed. But a great deal more doctoring has been done to the plans to assist Home Office make-believe about the efficacy of civil defence. Nuclear bombs have been conveniently targetted on tiny villages (e.g. Mallaig in Scotland, population 953 or Builth Wells in Wales, population 1,287) or on empty moorland (e.g. near Bideford in Devon).

At the same time, almost all the major cities of Britain were assumed not to have been attacked – London, Manchester, Edinburgh, Liverpool, Bristol, Cardiff, Sheffield in particular were to be left unscathed – while any bombs that *were* actually aimed at cities generally were to miss their targets. No bombs were aimed at, far less assumed to hit, any American military bases or indeed any major strategic military targets at all. The Polaris missile submarine bases at Holy Loch and Faslane on the Clyde were *not* to be attacked. Nor were any British or NATO military control centres.

The complete 'bomb plots' which were to have been used in *Hard Rock*, part of the still-confidential plans for the exercise, are shown overleaf. The target lists, marked 'DISTAFF (Directing staff) EYES ONLY' are, presumably, those which the Home Office would still use in future, if it went ahead with *Hard Rock* after getting its new legal powers to compel local authorities to cooperate. The target list would appear to have been doctored for two reasons; first, the Home Office did not wish to appear to confirm that any particular site – however obvious – might indeed be a nuclear target. US bases and major nuclear targets were, therefore, removed from the list. This would have been done during the submission of the plans for 'political clearance' by the Ministry of Defence.

Secondly, by writing an absurd scenario for the nuclear war exercise, omitting almost all obvious major targets, the Home Office could subsequently set out to 'prove' that its plans could work to save lives. When planning for the exercise began in June 1981, there were supposed to be 105 targets, already an optimistically low level of attack. By the time the Home Office and the MoD had deleted targets which were 'politically' undesirable (and turned hits into misses for the convenience of civil defence plans), this number was halved.

The scenarios for nuclear war on which *Hard Rock* was to have been based were more convincing than the target list. In order to prepare central and local government officials, who were to have taken to their bunkers for the exercise, the Home Office produced a set of simulated daily TV news bulletins, and daily official briefings for a ten-day period starting on 19 September. These chart the country's headlong rush to war, with daily ministerial broadcasts announcing 'all's well' – until on the evening of 2 October the nuclear holocaust begins.

AS ALWAYS, the Soviet Union is the supposed aggressor. At the beginning of September, it urged 'immediate action to dissolve military alliances' and by 18 September, NATO ('Blue Alliance') fears that Soviet ('Orange Pact') action if not countered, would inevitably lead to Soviet military domination of NATO members'. The Prime Minister broadcasts on 19 September that Britain has decided to reinforce NATO:

> In an evening broadcast to the nation, the Prime Minister urged the country to remain calm and support the government in its efforts to persuade the Soviet Union to draw back from the point of no return. Public opinion polls continued to show a substantial majority of the population agreed with the firm line being taken by the government.

By the next day, Soviet ships are circling North Sea oil rigs, and the population is showing signs of panic:

> There has been a run on tinned food, sugar and other storable items, fuel shortages were hindering resupply in some areas but overall there was no shortage of stocks and the public should calm down and buy sensibly . . . orders calling out the Reserves were signed in the afternoon. Country wide reporting-in by reservists is going well.

The schools start to close on 21 September and war looms. The simulated broadcasts report, in part:

> Public meetings continue to make most of the news. There is growing evidence of anxiety among the civil population as they realise that hostilities between NATO and the Warsaw Pact may be inevitable. There is increased evidence of movement to holiday accommodation in the west.
>
> Some government personnel and local authority staff are reported to have moved to secret wartime locations to get them ready for use should the situation deteriorate further.

On 22 September, the crisis deepens and the Home Office acts. According to a broadcast:

> In response to Parliamentary pressure, the Home Office 'Protect and Survive' guidance is to appear as four page inserts in tomorrow's newspapers. Guidance is expected to be broadcast on radio and TV throughout the coming week. The Home Office emphasises that these steps in no way imply that a nuclear attack on the United Kingdom is regarded as likely, let alone imminent.

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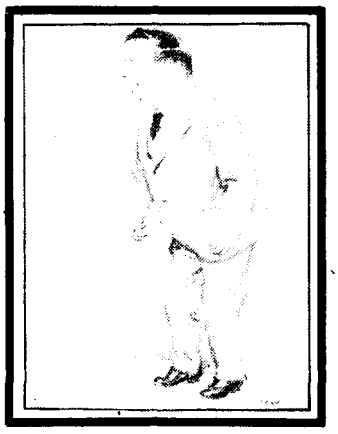

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(This portion of the *Hard Rock* plans had also been subjected to change. Passages about the flight of refugees from the cities were toned down and references to civil disorder and demonstrations were deliberately kept vague. The most striking alteration between successive drafts concerned the much-derided official booklet, 'Protect and Survive'. The title is now so embarrassing to the Home Office that it was deleted from a second draft. The replacement phrase seems scarcely any better – 'Public Do-It-Yourself Civil Defence'. It has, at least, the merit of being more accurate.)

By 25 September, the civilian population are assumed to be becoming restive. Although the first priority in official home defence plans is in fact the 'internal threat' of public dissent, the emphasis in *Hard Rock* has been put on sabotage. According to the plans:

> The motoring organisations report that there is increased traffic out of London towards the west. Ministerial television and radio broadcasts last night emphasised the disadvantages of leaving home.
>
> Early this morning a major oil refinery in Wales was attacked. A number of simultaneous explosions resulted in the destruction of the majority of the fuel tanks in the refinery.

Eventually, despite the government's appeals to 'stay put', a million and a half refugees take to the roads. *Hard Rock* at various points embodies the notion that, while those who have holiday homes and country cottages are thereby entitled to evacuate themselves, other city dwellers should stay put and take what's coming.

On 26 September, newspapers carry features about air raid precautions and a report of an assassination attempt on a 'senior Army officer'.

WAR STARTS ON 27 September. Tanks cross the border into West Germany at 4.50am. At 7am the Soviets begin a series of 'conventional' air raids on Britain. The targets selected for these raids (see map) are realistic, certainly compared with those selected for nuclear attack. The first bombs fall on the St Fergus North Sea gas terminal in north-east Scotland. A state of war between Britain and the Soviet Union is announced. On 28 September, a broadcast reports:

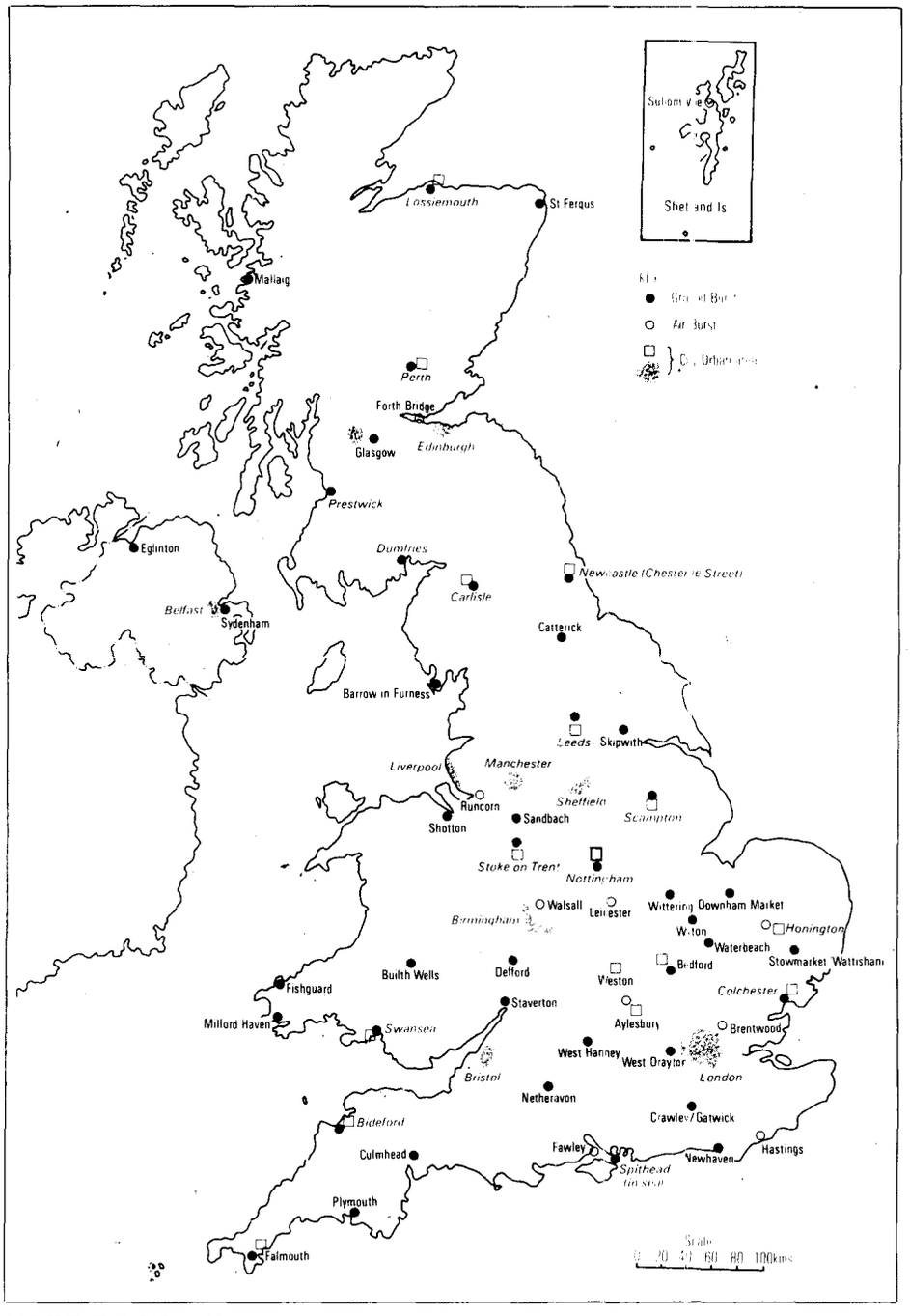
> The bombing raids on the United Kingdom have continued during the past 24 hours. Yesterday, Soviet forces attacked RAF stations . . . This morning . . . Soviet raiders attacked nearly 50 targets . . . At a rally in support of HMG peace moves this morning, there was strong opposition to Soviet objectives, but a call was made to NATO to redouble its efforts to seek peace for fear of an escalation to nuclear war.
>
> Traffic leaving the cities is still causing difficulties. In addition to the sheer volume of traffic on the roads, the situation is being exacerbated by vehicles running out of fuel.

In a series of dawn raids, Manchester, Liverpool, Chester, Oxford, Luton and many ports are bombed, as well as military targets. The next morning there are raids on Bristol, Doncaster, Lincoln and Swindon.

The civil defence exercise itself was to have started after the war had been going for two days, on 29 September. At this point the wargamers of *Hard Rock* were to have taken to their bunkers, fortified by a general situation report which started: 'There is deep concern among the population that war may escalate from conventional to nuclear'.

According to the *Hard Rock* plan at this stage patients are turfed out of hospitals so that medical staff can be evacuated, while DHSS offices are 'inundated' with unemployed asking for 'special needs' allowances to buy materials for Protect and Survive (i.e. 'Public Do-It-Yourself Civil Defence') shelters under their stairs and kitchen tables. All but a thousand prisoners are released from the jails. By 30 September, even in these cosmetically adjusted plans, the Home Office expected that 30 per cent of the population could not now obtain the food supplies it needed. (At an earlier stage, the plans even complain of food 'hoarding', even though 'Protect and Survive' specifically instructs householders to lay in two weeks' food supplies).

There was also now a 32 per cent shortage of the 'Do-It-Yourself Civil Defence' materials, and a 25 per cent shortage of petrol and oil. Almost one and a half million refugees had fled from major target areas. At this stage, the exercise would have begun properly for the embunkered players in local authority HQs and government Sub-Regional Headquarters. There would have been no actual field activities, except the Royal Air Force who would fly simulated reconnaissance flights over



HARD ROCK – Nuclear Targets

In this exercise bombs explode everywhere, except on important military targets or large cities. Only Leicester city centre is hit. Glasgow and Plymouth are near misses. Even the bombs over minor cities like Carlisle or Perth are anything from 5-12 miles off target. The only realistic targets are oil industry-related – St Fergus, Sullom Voe, Fawley, Falmouth, Milford Haven and Runcorn.

The only real military targets are Catterick, Wyton, Wattisham, Lossiemouth, Scampton, Prestwick and Portsmouth (in the sea at Spithead) – the last five being misses rather than 'hits'. About one-third of the nuclear attacks are on villages, towns, or deserted areas. Even such a nonsensical nuclear attack would kill or severely injure 12½ million people.

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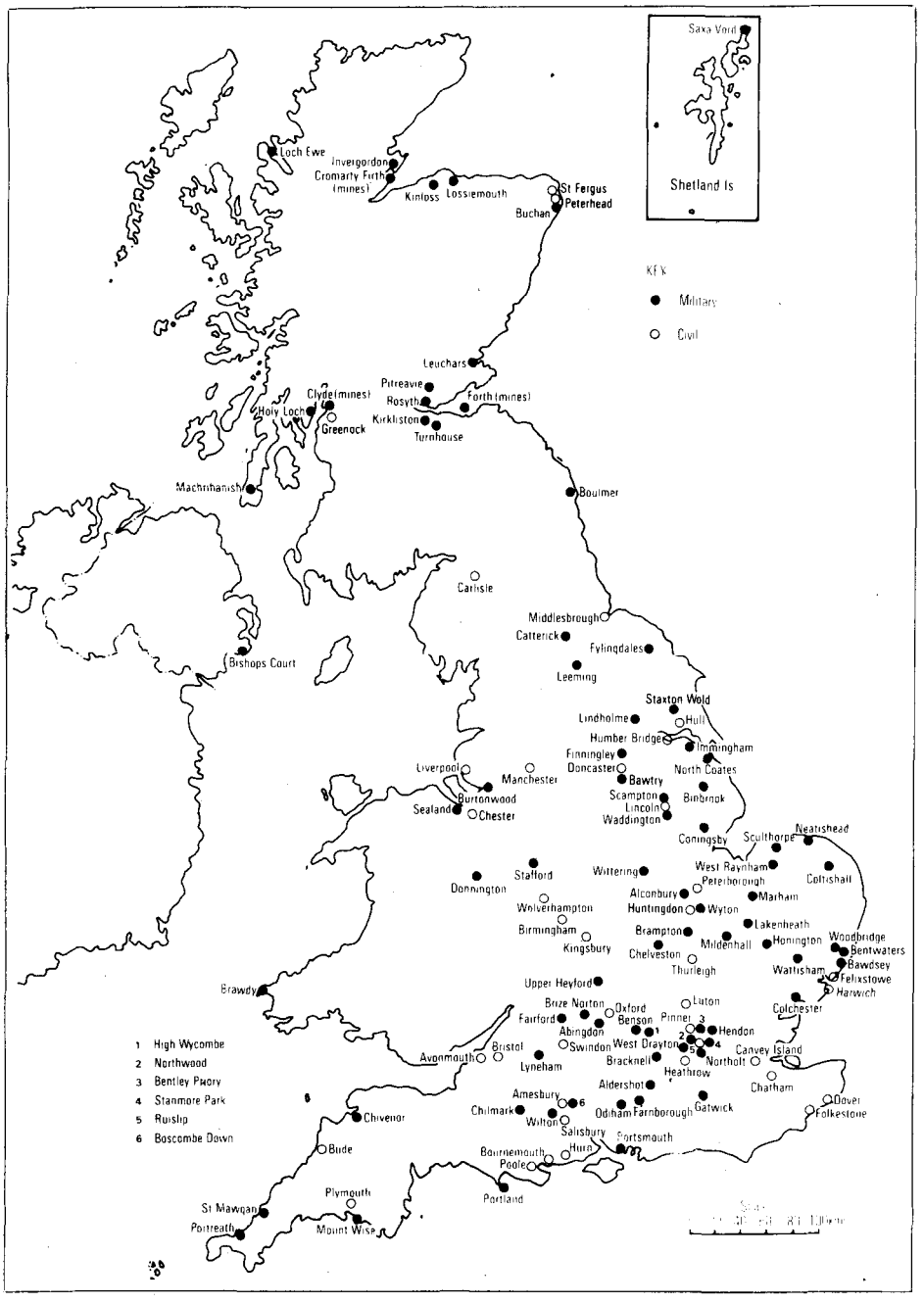

HARD ROCK – 'conventional' targets

Conventional military targets for the exercise were generally realistic. Most US bases – except those being prepared for the new cruise missile bases are included. If large cities were added to this list, it would become an authentic nuclear target list – similar to the nuclear target list of previous home defence exercises, such as a *Square Leg*, on which the *NS* reported in 1980.

nuclear target areas, while the Royal Navy would have practiced getting its ships in and out of unattacked ports.

UNTIL 2 OCTOBER, the exercise would only have been concerned with the effects of a conventional bombing attack, whose cumulative effects were assumed to be rather less than during some days during the World War 2 blitz. Then, at 2pm on Saturday, 2 October, the *Hard Rock* wargamers would have been read a further news bulletin:

> In Europe, heavy fighting continues on all fronts and there has been a sharp increase in the number of casualites on both sides. The extent of present Soviet penetration is not clear but second echelon forces have been committed and NATO forces are under extreme pressure . . . In the United Kingdom, conventional air attacks on military airfields . . . have continued. Large numbers of casualties have been suffered in areas adjacent to these targets. Localised disruption of transport and fuel supplies has brought about some shortages of food. Public reaction to the continued failure of peace initiatives is muted, but fear of escalation is now uppermost in everyone's minds. As a result, the population fears that nuclear attacks are imminent. All remaining home defence measures have been implemented and, where applicable, remaining staff of government departments and military headquarters have been deployed to their post-strike positions.

In this standard and much-rehearsed NATO scenario, one in which nuclear attack has been conveniently held back until home defence measures are complete, the next moves are clear. NATO forces are giving way, and standard NATO doctrine is to use tactical nuclear weapons in this situation to stop the advance. Soviet policy is equally clear – they will not make 'first use' of nuclear weapons but, once attacked, will reply massively.

So at 8pm on Saturday evening, the *Hard Rock* nuclear bombs start falling. The first three strike near West Drayton, Middlesex; Newhaven in Sussex; and Catterick in Yorkshire. The nuclear attack continues until 2.46am on Sunday morning, when a final 500 kiloton weapon strikes the inconsequential Humberside town of Skipwith. In the bunkers, the *Hard Rock* players would then spend a day practising the 'survival' phase after attack, and a further two days (theoretically, a month later) rehearsing what the Home Office whimsically calls 'recovery' from a nuclear attack. Once this was over, emergency planners would be free to discuss the general aspects of the exercise in public, proclaiming – with the aid of the carefully placed bomb plots – how effective government civil defence measures had been. The *Hard Rock* 'exercise specification' observes:

> Both Conventional and Nuclear Bomb Plots will be devised to meet the Home Office exercise requirements. Following comment by planning staffs, political clearance will be sought by UKCICC (the UK Commanders-in-Chief Committee) through the Ministry of Defence.

The plans also note:

> Exercise plans . . . should not be taken as a realistic description . . . of the weight or distribution of an enemy's attack.

That is not a mistake which anyone who examines the Bomb Plots in detail is likely to make.

REMARKABLY, WHEN the effects of the *Hard Rock* nuclear attack are examined in detail, they provide a quite surprising, and for the Home Office unwelcome, illustration of the devastation that would be caused by a nuclear attack. The Home Office has a computer programme for estimating the dead and injured after any type of nuclear attack.* A similarly organised, but more accurate computer analysis has been constructed by Philip Steadman of the Open University and Dr Stan Openshaw of Newcastle University. The *Hard Rock* nuclear attack has already been examined by them. Even with the bombs bursting on tiny hamlets instead of large cities, on realistic assumptions some 12 million people would have died or been severely injured – about 2 million from the direct effects of the bombs, and 5 million from fallout, while the vast majority of the severely injured would also soon die, given the unavailability of necessary medical care. Paradoxically, therefore, even the cosmetic fiction of *Hard Rock* undermines the government's case.

Reporting the 'postponement' of *Hard Rock* in July, the Home Secretary promised that the 'devoted effort' put into drawing up the plans 'will not be wasted. We can be sure that the experience will be put to good use when the exercise is held at a later date'. New regulations under the Civil Defence Act of 1948, are being devised to force councils to 'play' in and test their plans with such exercises as *Hard Rock*. But can a law really be devised to force a society to play at make-believe? □

Next week: The Maggiebunker

*The deficiencies of these Home Office computer assessments, which have been the basis of ministerial pronouncements, will be examined in a further extract from *WAR PLAN UK* in the *New Statesman* on 1 October.

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LABOUR'S PROGRAMME '82

'Let them throw us out'

BARBARA CASTLE, a long-standing opponent of the EEC, argues here in a controversial article that Labour's Programme '82 adopts too negative an attitude to British membership

AS LABOUR PARTY workers prepare to assemble for what could always be the last party conference before a general election everyone knows that the party is in trouble. It is not only the falling membership. It is not even the opinion polls, which every sensible politician learns to mistrust. It is rather that the party cringes at the prospect of every by-election – particularly in working-class areas. We are no longer confident that we can mobilise the vote of the people we were brought into being to represent.

Let's face it. There must, by definition, be something very wrong with a Labour Party that is failing to get its case across even to the working class.

It is not that our policies are too radical. After all, Mrs Thatcher is just as radical in her way as the Labour Left. I remember participating in the 1979 general election, though as a campaigner, not a candidate. Every night I used to come back to my hotel to watch the late-night election news and hear her, shrill but defiant, making an appeal for change which put rings around bland Uncle Jim.

Today, with her economic policy in ruins round her, she is still on the offensive, and even managing – heaven defend us! – to corner the moral argument. In speech after vigorous speech she has portrayed her policies in terms that appeal to a lot of people's natural instincts – and by no means always their worst. She has actually managed to exploit the Falklands victory in 'one nation' language, claiming it as proof of the rightness of her free enterprise philosophy when, as Peter Jenkins has pointed out in the *Guardian*, it proved the exact opposite.

What is the clue to these political paradoxes? Mrs Thatcher gets away with it in my view because her approach is simple, positive and populist. The Labour Party on the other hand is managing to appear confused, convoluted and remote. Our excellent policies are being put across in such a welter of detail and institutional argument that the major philosophic and economic themes get lost. Not least we often cast ourselves out of character, seeming authoritarian instead of democratic, insular instead of internationalist. We don't present a clear and above all a positive image to the electorate.

In no field is this more true than in the party's current commitment to withdraw Britain from the EEC. After years of haggling about the right conditions for our membership, we have suddenly announced that we *know* membership would be incompatible with what a Labour government would want to do and that we are going to wash our hands of the whole show. The case is assumed to be self-evident.

In doing so we have allowed the tactical initiative to pass to our enemies, when our aim on every issue must be to put our opponents on the defensive and not allow them to do that to us. Few political battles are won on a negative, as those of us who campaigned for a 'No vote' in the 1975 Common Market referendum found to our cost. Our opponents then – Harold Wilson and Jim Callaghan – won the first round when they obtained a referendum motion – 'Do you think that the United Kingdom should stay in the European Community?' – which enabled them to rally people to vote 'Yes' for the status quo, while we critics were urging them to vote for a negative.

Far from having learned from that experience we anti-marketeers seem hell-bent on repeating it. By going for a policy of withdrawal, rather than attack, on a central issue of party policy we are again fighting against something, rather than for something.

As a result, the Labour Party, which has been consistently right in its criticism of the European Community, now finds itself on the defensive, parrying questions such as 'If we quit, where will we go?' or 'With whom would we trade?'. We shall apparently have to spend the first months of office arguing about how we extract ourselves from our Treaty commitments instead of how we get the economy moving. The danger is that we shall lose sight of the economic battle in the complexities of the institutional one.

This does not mean to say that the party's analysis is wrong. On the contrary, my belief in the correctness of its criticism of the Community hotch-potch of free market economies and agricultural protectionism has been strongly reinforced by my first-hand experience of how it works. I have no doubt at all that the Treaty of Rome, if rigorously applied, would make it impossible for a Labour government to carry out its alternative economic strategy. It would make it impossible for us to plan for economic expansion by controlling the outflow of capital, stopping a disastrous flood of imports when we reflate, or giving a shot in the arm to ailing industries.

It is not our strategy that I am questioning but our tactics for outmanoeuvring our enemies.

And those enemies are far stronger than most of us have yet realised. Anyone who believes that a withdrawal policy is an automatic vote-catcher is living in cloud-cuckoo-land. Of course membership of the Common Market is unpopular, but that is not necessarily a guide to the mood which will predominate when the election comes. It is one thing to register a complaint to the opinion pollster; quite another to cast a vote for going into the unknown.

Moods could change rapidly when the

MADAME BLAVATSKY

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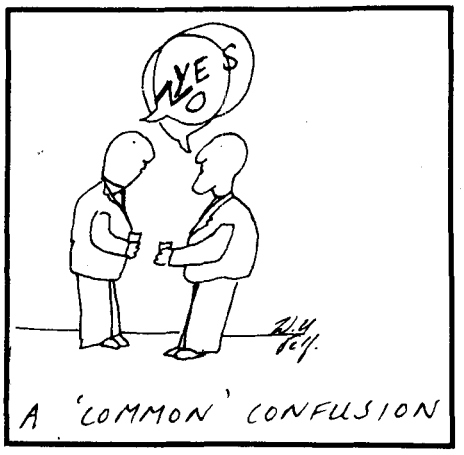

powerful forces of British industry and banking bring their massive resources into play to swamp our case. The old arguments will be trotted out as they were in 1975: 'Your job at risk if we withdraw', 'Threat to our trade'. The resources were unequal enough then, heaven knows, with us 'No' campaigners only able to raise £133,000 while the Britain in Europe Movement spent £1.5 million, the bulk of it from British firms and banks. And next time the campaign against us would be reinforced by all the resources of the European Commission which is already, with the connivance of Tory MEPs, using the European Parliament for alarmist propaganda against withdrawal – 'Unemployment would rise to 5 million if Britain left', Commissioner Ivor Richard was claiming the other day. Already the European Parliament is discussing allocating some £19 million to be spent in preparation for the European elections in 1984. As a separate political group, the British Tories will get a good slice of this to glorify our continued membership. Labour MEPs will not be allowed to use their modest share to campaign for coming out.

But worse than all this is that, once again, the Labour Party will be playing out of character. As the appeals come, as they will, from European socialists to us to stay in (with the left-wingers among them being the most vociferous), the party will suffer from split personality. Instead of crusading as the party which could mobilise fellow socialists in the fight against unemployment and inequality, we shall be fighting for the right to wash our hands of them.

At a time when socialists in Greece, Spain and Portugal are lining up to identify themselves with the Community and when every newly independent country in Africa hastens to link itself with the EEC through the Lomé convention (Zimbabwe lost no time in joining), it is no answer to say that a Labour government would still remain active in the Socialist International. Politics is about fighting on the nearest battleground that is to hand.

This surge of identification with the EEC has nothing to do with the acceptance of the Treaty of Rome and all its murky capitalistic works. The PASOK government in Greece has already entered some serious caveats about the rules in a memorandum of discontent with the entry terms that have been forced on it. The associated developing countries grumble that the Lomé convention is not being properly operated (particularly the way in which the alleged policy of stabilising the prices of their export products is running out of money). These countries are looking desperately for a point of help in a dangerous world, but they are ripe for Socialist leadership.

ALL THIS is a plea, not for the abandonment of our strategy, but for the adoption of a tactic which is more positive. Instead of arguing that we *know* we couldn't carry out socialist policies within the Community, let us announce that we are going ahead with our own policies and make the European authorities react to us. If they then rule us out of court, the responsibility for the breach will be theirs, not ours. They will have proved our case.

I would therefore like to see Labour's election manifesto say something like this:

> Unemployment is a crime against our people and our country. The next Labour government will give the fight against it over-riding priority. We will not allow vested interests at home, or Britain's membership of the European Community, to obstruct our plans for reviving British industry, expanding the economy and getting our people back to work. We will insist that the savings of our people must be invested first and foremost in our own industries and will control the outflow of capital so as to ensure that the needs of our own economy are met first. We will take whatever steps, financial or otherwise, are necessary to restore and expand Britain's industrial base and while our industries are being rebuilt we will control the flood of imports which would otherwise wreck our expansion plans.
>
> This is not a beggar-my-neighbour policy British deflation has done more to damage other countries' trade than a sensible policy for planning the growth of demand would do. Our proposals are incompatible with the present rules of the EEC and those rules must be changed if Britain is to remain a member. We would hope to convince our European friends that cooperation round a plan for expanding trade and creating jobs is better than trying to force everyone into the straitjacket of a set of free market rules. But we shall make it clear from the outset that the next Labour government intends to *act* to save Britain's economy and will not allow the European Commission to dictate its policy. It will then be for our European partners to decide whether they wish us to remain a member of the Community and whether they are ready to change the rules to make that possible.

I believe such a clarion call would act as a catalyst. It would strike a responsive cord among many European socialists who are deeply worried about the way the Community is developing. It would enable us to carry our socialist attack into the very citadel of the *laisser-faire* economics of the Treaty of Rome, which has left Europe with some 12 million unemployed. Not least it would put the Jenkins-Owen 'Europe at any price' brigade on the defensive, forcing them to answer our questions, such as 'how do you propose to get unemployment down under a set of rules which have so abysmally failed to check its rise?'

In the two years since the withdrawal policy was adopted, a number of people have been having second thoughts about its tactical wisdom. It is not too late for the party to adapt its approach, but it must start now – at this Conference. □

Barbara Castle is MEP for Greater Manchester North.

NAVAL DEFENCE

Admiralty scorns new frigate

PHILIP GEDDES reveals a confidential Admiralty paper that shows the Navy's new 'wondership', forced on it by the Tories, is not up to the job

RECENT PUBLIC DEBATE about the shape of Britain's Royal Navy will be dramatically sharpened by new revelations contained in a top secret Admiralty paper, received recently by the *New Statesman*. It bears out fears in the Navy that the government is selling the service short, expressed recently by Sir Henry Leach, the First Sea Lord. Sir Henry has attacked the latest White Paper as 'a con trick . . . (and) . . . a catalogue of half truths.' Ministerial statements that a Falklands type operation could be carried out in years to come were, he said, 'a pack of lies'.

The secret paper received by the *NS* concerns the Navy's latest 'wondership', the Type 23 frigate. Ministers have pointed to the new ship as a sign of their commitment to the Royal Navy. The Admiralty's own evaluation of the ship, which carries a high security classification, is unenthusiastic. The professional opinion of the Naval Staff is scathing: the Type 23 is 'a compromise'. It is said to have 'areas of operational risk . . . insofar as vulnerability, redundancy . . . and other areas are concerned.'

Hardly a suitable description for the ship on which the Royal Navy of the future will increasingly depend. The Type 23 is intended as the replacement for the numerous and highly successful Leander class of frigates, now nearing the end of their useful working life. It will be the workhorse of any surface fleet during the next 20 years. In the defence debate in the House of Commons on 1 July, Mr Nott, the Defence Secretary, announced that he had already approved the design of the Type 23. He said the first order would be placed in 1984, and that 'the eventual aim was to achieve an order rate of at least three Type 23s a year.' This would ensure complete replacement of the Leander class in about 15 years.

Much hangs on the success of the Type 23. Neither of the Navy's two most recent classes of major warship, the Types 42 and 22, performed well in the Falklands and no more are to be ordered of either type. With the Leanders, the first of which was commissioned in 1964, coming near the end of their time, a good replacement is urgently needed. The Naval Staff's assessment of the Type 23, as contained in this paper, indicates that the new design is anything but a good ship.

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The assessment is contained in NSR (short for Naval Staff Requirement) 7069. The NSR is the document which gives the Navy's indication of the job any ship should do and a judgment of its ability to do it. Since it is the document to which the Navy's Ship Design department and British Shipbuilders are expected to work, and is drawn up in consultation with them, it is, to all intents and purposes, a detailed specification for the finished product.

THE NSR on the Type 23 makes it clear that the ship is the result of one factor alone – price. That price was determined crudely. It was to cost no more than a mid-life modernisation for a Leander frigate. The government has justified its policy of axing dockyard jobs on the grounds that the mid-life modernisations carried out in the dockyards are a waste of money. Hence the need for any new ship to cost less than a refit. The paper states baldly: 'We therefore took an arbitrary target unit cost price of £67.5m' – a figure some few millions less than modernisation would cost.

The paper then lists the dismal performance that can be expected from a ship of that price. The description is of a slow, poorly armed, vulnerable and ineffective fighting vessel. The hull life of the Type 23 is expected to be only 18 years (against 20 or more for most current designs), the maximum speed only 25 knots (at least five knots slower than most Royal Navy ships, and 10 to 15 knots slower than the most modern Russian submarines).

The paper goes on to discuss the ship's weapons. Written before the Falklands War, much of it reads sourly in the light of that experience. The folly of building ships which cannot protect themselves adequately against air and surface attack is repeated in the Type 23 design. It has a more limited ability to defend itself against attack than any of the ships involved in the Falklands campaign. It will carry only a limited ship-to-ship missile system – an addition since the Falklands and the NSR – but no Exocet missile, which would have demanded too much space, too much money and extra crew.

It will not even carry a proper gun, like the Vickers quick-firing 4.5 inch which proved so versatile and effective in the South Atlantic. Against air attack, it would be woefully underarmed, carrying only one 40 mm gun and a scaled-down version of

the Seawolf missile system. The paper notes with clinical precison that, against a Russian missile attack, the Type 23's limited Seawolf system 'should provide at least a 50 per cent survivability'. Cold comfort to those who will serve in the ship in years to come.

Other aspects of the ship perpetuate some longstanding RN design blunders. In an attempt to reduce engine power and crewing, the Type 23 will be another long thin ship; a policy which, as with so many current ships, will reduce its weapons capacity dramatically. Too much of the ship's cost – three-quarters of the total – is hull, engines and basic electrics. It does have a better range than most current frigates at cruising speed: but since that cruising speed is only 14 knots (much slower than most modern freighters and way below the Navy's current standard cruising speed of 18 knots), its theoretical ability to go a long way on a tank will be reduced in practice by having to run the engines at an uneconomically high speed. It is fitted with diesel engines for basic cruising and one gas turbine for speed which will mean an unnecessarily complex engine room.

The RN's much-vaunted ability to 'ras' (refuel at sea) is in fact one of the service's greatest weaknesses, forced on it by basic design defects which require ships to refuel every three or four days. This forces the Navy to operate at the speed of its slowest tankers, and means that warships must be diverted to protect these tankers from enemy attack. Seen in this light, the Type 23 looks a plodding sort of vessel, rather than a modern warship.

THE PAPER concludes that the ship will cost (in 1981/2 price terms) some £84m and that an ordering programme of between eight and twelve ships should be considered. But it is clear the Naval Staff do not like the ship: their summary describes it in lukewarm terms as:

> a compromise solution which is nevertheless considered to have the necessary endurance, speed, stability and armament, and should be capable of production within the upper cost limit imposed by the committee. There are areas of operational risk in the proposed design insofar as vulnerability, redundancy, onboard spares and other areas are concerned.

The Staff recommended that the public launch of the Type 23, since undertaken by Mr Nott, should emphasise the 'cheapness' of the ship (which they call 'the principal public interest').

So far Mr Nott has had an easy time quieting his back-benchers. But these revelations about the Type 23 design will make his task much harder The Type 23 looks like the sort of bargain basement offer the Admiralty could never afford to accept. That may be why the paper has come into the open in this way. The Navy knows that the passing of Mr Nott won't mean a change of policy; but if it wants the right ships in the Navy of tomorrow, it will have to make sure that a lame duck Minister of Defence does not saddle it with a rotten design for political reasons. □

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THE CITY

Physician heal thyself

The latest insurance imbroglio goes to the heart of the issue of Lloyd's self-regulation. GODFREY HODGSON explains why

WHEN HE GOT THERE, the cupboard was . . . well, not bare, but less well-stocked than he had expected to find it, perhaps by as much as $25 million. That was the disagreeable experience that befell Jack Bogardus, boss of the second-biggest insurance brokers in the United States, Alexander & Alexander, when he got control of Alexander Howden, the British 'insurance conglomerate' he had bought from his old friends Ken Grob and Ron Comery.

The embarrassing affair of the missing millions is not just another rumpus in the Lloyd's community. It cannot be dismissed as a trivial or peripheral matter, the result of letting the wrong sort of chaps into the club. The Howden affair touches the reputation of an industry that owes most of its prosperity to that elusive commodity, so slow to accumulate, so quickly forfeit. It raises insistent questions about business morality in the City of London. More to the point, it raises questions about the cherished assumption that the City ought to regulate itself.

On the most optimistic assumptions it will be Christmas before the accountants discover exactly what happened at Howden's. But if press reports are accurate in saying that Alexander & Alexander discovered that millions of dollars of what ought to have been reinsurance premiums were spirited from a Howden subsidiary to companies in Panama secretly owned by Howden executives, then the affair could hardly be more embarrassing. Howden is not a marginal business, like most of those involved in the more celebrated recent scandals. It is the fifth-biggest firm of Lloyd's brokers. It controls the underwriting syndicates operated by Ian Posgate, the legendary 'Goldfinger', allegedly the highest paid man in Britain.

Posgate was 'severely censured' by the Committee of Lloyd's in 1970 for conduct the exact nature of which has never been made public. As a result the Committee ordained that he could only accept risks under the supervision of a firm of Lloyd's brokers: as it happens, Alexander Howden. Today, Posgate himself is a member of the Committee. That is the background to the leading role Goldfinger played in the parliamentary battle over the Lloyd's Act that received the Royal Assent this summer. Posgate was largely responsible for persuading a committee of the House of Commons, chaired by Michael Meacher, to force Lloyd's to accept 'mandatory divestment': that is, that brokers must be made to sell off their underwriting agencies in order to reduce conflicts of interest. Posgate had his own reasons for wanting that reform. And Grob and Comery of Howden, who led the opposition to it, had their reasons too. (Neither Michael Meacher nor the rest of the Commons committee, incidentally, seems to have had the slightest inkling of this back history.) By the closing stages of the fight over the Act, when they financed a last-ditch stand in the House of Lords, hiring QCs as lesser mortals might hire jobbing gardeners, Grob and Comery had emerged as spokesmen for that considerable fraction of the Lloyd's Establishment who believe that making brokers 'divest' themselves of their underwriting agencies will be the beginning of the end for Lloyd's.

Worst of all, from the point of view of Lloyd's, Howden hit Lloyd's where it hurts most: in its reputation with the United States insurance industry. The US provides roughly half of Lloyd's premium income. Lloyd's is rightly sensitive about the market's good name in America. 'Who steals my purse, steals dross,' might be the underwriters' motto, 'but he that filches from me my good name with the New York State Superintendent of Insurance, makes me poor indeed.'

That golden stream of premium from the United States, much of it reinsurance premium paid by big US insurance companies anxious to spread big potential losses around, and almost all of it channelled to Lloyd's through an elite group of big US brokers like Alexander & Alexander, is doubly vulnerable. It could be cut off, or at least sharply cut back, if US regulatory authorities ever became seriously concerned about the quality of Lloyd's own regulation. That was why the members of the syndicate involved in the notorious Sasse case in 1980 were able to twist the Committee's arm into paying some two-thirds of their £20 million-plus losses; because if the affair wasn't quickly settled, Lloyd's as a whole might have failed to pass the Department of Trade audit requirements used by US regulatory authorities. The second danger was that if US insurance professionals began to have serious doubts about the probity of the Lloyd's market, they might start to divert premium to other markets.

The Committee of Lloyd's, and in particular the chairman, Peter Green, who was knighted in the last honours list, know only too well how urgently Lloyd's needs to tighten up its performance in policing the market. The urgency of reforming the antiquated constitution of Lloyd's derived essentially from the obvious inadequacy of the Committee's regulatory powers. It was driven home, not only by highly publicised messes like the Sasse, Savonita and computer leasing affairs, but even more by a row that never got much publicity, over the insuring of a large slice of the European butter mountain. That case made the Committee realise how pitifully limited was its power to discipline the market. And in accepting divestment, the Committee has shown how high a price it was willing to pay for that power.

It is fair to say that the Lloyd's fathers were impelled to do this, not only by a righteous desire to cast down the wicked from their seats, but also by an unholy fear that if they didn't put their house in order, then Parliament would. That was why they set up a working party, chaired by that archetypal Establishment figure, Sir Henry Fisher. Its remit was to ask, not how Lloyd's ought to be regulated, but how Lloyd's should regulate itself. Outside regulation, by statutorily constituted public authority, of the kind that governs the insurance industry in every other major country, was not seriously examined by Fisher, whose report dismisses it in a single paragraph.

The Chairman and Committee of Lloyd's can be expected to feel that the Howden affair only demonstrates the wisdom of what they have already done in pushing through the Lloyd's act. They believe that, once the arrangements set up by the Act have come into effect, matters like the Howden affair – not to mention the fuss over the insurance of the Qantas fleet, which also involved Posgate and Howden's – could all have been easily and tidily dealt with.

It is possible to be sceptical. There is a fundamental difficulty about allowing a commercial organisation to regulate itself, and that is that it is always going to find it difficult to distinguish between the requirements of commercial advantage, and the dictates of the law and the regulations. No one expects the Weights and Measures statutes to be enforced by the grocers. The whole history of the Howden affair, going right back to the original bizarre decision to hand over to Mr Grob and Mr Comery the task of ensuring that Goldfinger walked in the right path, demonstrates the potential dangers of this conflict between commercial and disciplinary considerations. It also reinforces the suspicion that, in the City of London, as the man in the street might crudely put it, money talks. □

MENTAL HEALTH

A man with a mind of his own

FRANCIS WHEEN asks: should nurses always obey doctors' instructions, even if they believe them to be wrong?

IN THE MEDICAL profession there is a straightforward hierarchy: doctors give orders, nurses obey them. But what if a nurse thinks that a doctor's instructions are not in the best interests of the patient? Les Parsons will be hoping for an official answer to this question when, later this month, he lodges a claim for unfair dismissal with an industrial tribunal in Norwich. In July he lost his job as a trainee mental nurse because he refused to perform Electro-Convulsive Therapy (ECT) on psychiatric patients.

There are no legal precedents establishing whether or not nurses are ever justified in disobeying orders. Les Parsons will be represented at his hearing by Mind, the National Association for Mental Health,

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who see it as a test case. Larry Gostin of Mind hopes that the hearing will establish one important point: that nurses are a profession in their own right and are entitled to be guided by their own professional ethics.

In May 1979 Les Parsons began his three-year psychiatric nursing course, at the end of which he should have become a Registered Mental Nurse. His supervisors at the Broadland School of Nursing, Norwich, found him to be a model student. In February 1981 one of his assessors wrote: 'He is an exceptionally kind and thoughtful nurse, taking an interest in all his patients.'

In the course of his training Parsons helped to administer ECT to six patients. But in April 1981 he announced that he would no longer perform the treatment. His objection was that ECT, which involves giving an electric shock to the brain, induces cerebral convulsions and kills some brain cells; he argued that any operation which deliberately damages the human brain 'could not be just a medical question'. It also involved ethics; and his own ethics would not allow him to continue with ECT.

Following Parsons's rejection of ECT, the local nursing authorities consulted the General Nursing Council, who said that all students needed 'adequate experience' of the treatment. No definition of 'adequate experience' was given, but the Broadland School of Nursing then introduced one: all students would have to participate in six sessions of ECT with at least two patients in each session. Parsons's experience fell short of this, but, as he points out, 'those conditions were not in my contract of employment'.

Parsons was told that if he failed to comply with the new requirements he would be regarded as having broken his contract and would be liable to dismissal. He stood firm, refusing to accept the new conditions but adding that he had experience of ECT and was perfectly prepared to be examined on his knowledge of it.

'They backed down from terminating my contract,' says Parsons, 'and said I could carry on until they had to apply to the General Nursing Council for permission for me to take my exams in June 1982, but they would tell the GNC that I didn't satisfy the training requirements for ECT.' Sure enough, the General Nursing Council told Parsons that he could not sit his exams. In June this year he was given one month's notice of dismissal; he left on 5 July.

Despite his objections to ECT, Parsons's assessors remained impressed with his abilities. As recently as May, only a month before he was given notice, one of them wrote:

> Find it very difficult to fault Mr Parsons. He has shown that he is a caring, kind, considerate nurse. Thought well of by staff and patients. He is inclined to be very idealistic – which has led to the problem of him being excluded from attending ECT sessions. He is conscientious, hard-working and good humoured.

It is hard to doubt that Les Parsons would have made an excellent nurse. Yet, as he says, 'I've been prevented from ever working as a psychiatric nurse because of their refusal to let me take my exams'.

Les Parsons's actions are a challenge to the traditional relations between the medical and nursing professions. The idea that nurses will not always unquestioningly obey doctors may be a new one, but it seems likely to become more common in the next few years. Only last month Paul Walsh, a senior nursing officer at Wexham Park Psychiatric Hospital, Slough, was suspended after refusing to accept a consultant's instruction that he should order his staff to hold down and forcibly administer drugs to a patient whom the nurses considered lucid. Nurses at the hospital are now refusing to speak to the consultant.

In June David Ennals, Les Parsons's MP, tried to introduce an amendment to the new Mental Health Bill which would have allowed nurses not to participate in ECT if they had conscientious objections to it. As Ennals pointed out, doctors already have the right of conscientious objection, since it is entirely up to them whether they prescribe ECT or not. However, the standing committee on the Bill rejected Ennals's amendment by eight votes to six.

What is particularly galling about Les Parsons's dismissal is that the use of ECT is actually on the decline. The suggestion that he cannot be a mental nurse without having considerable experience of ECT is thus even more unnecessary than it would have been ten years ago. ECT is no longer used for conditions such as schizophrenia, where it has been shown to be ineffective; it is now confined to depressive illnesses; and even with these there is growing doubt as to its usefulness. Tests carried out at Southampton in 1978 and at Northwick Park in 1980 suggested that patients recovered from depression just as quickly without ECT as with it. Professor Steven Rose of the Open University says that he cannot think of any condition for which the use of ECT would be desirable: 'Knowing what the treatment does to the cells of the brain makes me pretty hostile to its use. I don't believe it does much good.'

Steven Rose and Les Parsons both believe that there is a political side to ECT, since it is used mainly on working-class people, particularly women. Like the massive over-prescribing of drugs by doctors, it is used 'to control people when what is needed is an understanding of the social reasons for people's distress'. Steven Rose considers it expressive of a medical system 'which mixes up therapy with control and punishment'.

At the moment, a doctor can prescribe ECT at will. Under the new Mental Health Act a second doctor will have to approve too. But this is hardly a great leap forward: it is as if a police officer had to have another police officer's approval before arresting someone. Decisions will still be taken by doctors alone. As Les Parsons says, his rebellion against ECT 'threatens medical autonomy in psychiatry by showing that there are non-medical dimensions to psychiatric treatment'. Doctors, like civil servants and the police, cling to the myth of the value-free judgment, the notion that ethical and social considerations have no part in their work. If Les Parsons succeeds in his claim for unfair dismissal, other nurses may also be emboldened to question medical hegemony. □

FOREIGN NEWS: MIDDLE EAST 1

The fall of Lebanon's strong man

CLAUDIA WRIGHT speculates on the assassination of Bashir Gemayel and describes the independence of the dead President-elect

EXPERTS HAVE been intrigued by the size of the bomb that killed Bashir Gemayel, the president-elect of Lebanon, at the Phalange party headquarters building in East Beirut. The method his assassins chose was a detonation large enough to demolish the three-story structure totally. Early press reports identified a 400-pound bomb as responsible. Experts say a professional demolitionist using high-grade military plastic could do the job with a couple of pounds perfectly placed around the main structural supports of the building. Less experienced men, the experts say, would need two suitcases of explosive – about 60 pounds.

However small or large the petards on which Gemayel was hoist on Tuesday, the assassins had to have the time and access to the Phalange headquarters to carry in and place their deadly cargo without challenge or interruption. On the Saturday before Gemayel's death, an acquaintance of mine visited the Phalange party building for an interview. He was there for four hours in the middle of the day. On his way into the building, and on his way out, he noticed a heavy concentration of Israeli troops and vehicles in the street. In the plaza, about 20 yards in front of the building, he counted 20 Israeli soldiers, in and around two or three armoured personnel carriers. 'That's a lot of Israelis', he said to the Phalange party official who met him at the entrance. 'There are just as many', the official replied, 'behind the building'. The party officials he spoke to were all embarrassed by the obvious show of Israeli force around the President-elect's headquarters in the final weeks before his inauguration.

For a half-mile stretch on either side of the building, he counted about 200 Israeli troops, and about 20 armoured personnel carriers. He noticed that several of these had an unusual number of radio masts and aerials fixed to the superstructure. He was told the Israelis were listening in to the Voice of Lebanon, whose building was nearby, as well as to telephone and short-wave communications in the neighbourhood. The Beirutis in the area told him that the Israelis made such an open display of their surveillance because they wanted everyone to know what they were doing and to be aware of their strength. In Beirut there are many people who think that if the sun rose in the West it would be because the Israelis wanted it that way.

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How, then, was it possible on such a closely observed and guarded street for 'Palestinian terrorists', according to the official Israeli explanation, to penetrate the Phalange headquarters, and plant from 200 to 400 pounds of explosive? The PLO and the Palestinians left in Lebanon detested Bashir Gemayel, but few believe the Israeli claim that the assassination could have been the Palestinians' doing.

Perhaps then the Syrians, or their Lebanese allies? At the Arab League summit in Fez a week ago, Syria's President, Hafez Assad, revealed that he was ready to accept Gemayel's demand that he pull out immediately from the Bekaa valley. The Syrians had also made tentative moves to begin a dialogue with Gemayel, and despite the deep distrust of Gemayel, there was growing support within the Arab League, and within the Moslem leadership in Beirut, for a rapprochement with Gemayel that would prevent his signing a peace treaty with Israel. The Syrians and Lebanese Moslems might have cursed Gemayel and wished him the same violent end he dealt out to others, but would they benefit from his assassination?

The most common answer in Beirut is no. The popular hypothesis is that the only group able to penetrate the Israeli cordon around the Phalange building, and benefit from his demise, were the Israelis themselves – if not the Begin government, then perhaps a renegade group within General Sharon's army.

Israeli troops surged into West Beirut the morning after the assassination, ostensibly to preserve the security of the city but fulfilling Sharon's repeated threat to complete the military operation against 'terrorists' that was begun three months ago. In league with the Israeli army, Major Saad Haddad, the Lebanese commander of the southern region of the country, may also have had a motive for the attack, since over the past four weeks the President-elect had told Haddad to break his links with Israel and submit to Lebanese authority, or else face an indictment in the Lebanese courts.

In Washington, there is considerable anxiety about the Israeli reaction to Gemayel's removal, just as there had been deep ambiguity two months ago about whether Gemayel was the best candidate for the presidency. US officials then had been concerned that Gemayel would provoke too much sectarian opposition, that he would be perceived by the Lebanese Moslems as too obviously the candidate of Israel. Washington initially doubted Gemayel could be elected, and some officials argued for a Maronite candidate more amenable to compromise with the Muslims.

Gemayel: almost everyone had a motive to kill him

After the election the Israelis crowed that they had been cleverer than the Americans – and US officials expressed private surprise that the election had turned out as easily for Gemayel as it did. But since the 23 August election, there have been signs that the tables have begun to turn on the Israelis. Gemayel wavered on the peace treaty, and manoeuvred for a combination of Arab cash and American military and diplomatic support to save him from Israeli pressure.

Phalange officials had expressed the position that since Lebanon already had signed an armistice treaty with Israel in 1948, and until Egypt followed suit in 1979, it had been the only Arab state to have both peace and recognised borders with Israel, there was no need for a new pact. What they feared was an extensive economic and territorial takeover of Lebanon by Israel, according to Jerusalem's interpretation of 'peace' and 'normalisation'.

Secretly on 1 September, Gemayel met in northern Israel with Prime Minister Begin, foreign minister Shamir, and General Sharon, Israel's defence minister. According to Israeli press reports, Gemayel was told to honour his earlier commitments to sign a treaty with Israel. Three days later, Sharon issued the public version of his threat to Gemayel – if he refused to sign a peace treaty, then Israel will 'have an interest in maintaining a special status in southern Lebanon, along a 40 to 50 kilometre security strip.'

If this didn't quite mean that Israel would keep its troops in Lebanon until Gemayel signed, it did imply – according to Sharon's leaks to the press – that, without a pact, Israel would bypass Gemayel altogether and support Major Saad Haddad in controlling Southern Lebanon. Israeli officials even hinted darkly that the Americans had been responsible for swinging Gemayel against them. US Secretary of State George Shultz then swung into action on 9 September, warning in a congressional statement against 'outside pressure or imposed solutions' in Lebanon. He added: 'A peace treaty that is signed at the point of a gun is not, in the end, a long-lasting peace treaty.'

WAS GEMAYEL'S death an Israeli plot? The truth may never be known, but the results over the next few weeks will show how far the incident will drive the Americans and Israelis apart over the future of Lebanon. The country is tottering once more on the edge of civil war. Except perhaps for Amin Gemayel, Bashir's more moderate and politically nationalistic brother, there is no successor candidate who is likely to risk Gemayel's fate.

The incident will compel the Reagan Administration to play a more interventionist role in Lebanese affairs than they have wanted to do. That is what the lame-duck President, Elias Sarkis, begged Washington for as soon as Gemayel's fate became known. But the Administration had hoped to avoid getting directly tangled with the Israelis over Lebanese politics, and whether it was intended that way or not, Gemayel's assassination seems to make such a tangle inevitable. An old US general who served President Eisenhower in the White House says that the situation reminds him of Eisenhower's advice to Anthony Eden at the beginning of the 1956 Suez crisis. 'It's one thing to get in there, Anthony', Eisenhower had said, 'but how are you going to get out?' Eden didn't have an answer for that one – neither do the Begin or Reagan governments now. □

Mustapha Karkouti adds:

FOR THE FIRST TIME since its independence from France in 1943 Lebanon seems to be united, at least in condemning the assassination of President-to-be Bashir Gemayel. A presidential statement described him as a martyr who was a victim of 'a criminal conspiracy committed against Lebanon'. The Sunni Moslem Prime Minister, Shafik Al-Wazzan, also condemned the assassination. So did the major leftist Moslem 'Al-Mourabitoun' movement of Ibrahim Kulailat. The ex-premier, the Sunni Moslem Sa'eb Salam, who led the opposition to Gemayel's role denounced the assassination of Gemayel as a 'crime' which 'shocked us'. Nabih Birri, leader of the Lebanese Shiite pro-Iranian faction telephoned his condolences to the father-founder of the right-wing Phalangist party. The pro-Iraqi Lebanese parliamentarian Dr Abdulmajid Al-Rafi'i of Tripoli, Northern Lebanon, also issued a statement denouncing the 'ugly crime'.

Many Lebanese and Palestinian leaders, including Yasser Arafat, have accused Israel. Involvement of American agents and a Phalangist faction is not ruled out in Beirut. The extremely tight security (see Claudia Wright's article) makes it almost impossible for a Leftist-Moslem group or a Palestinian group to carry out such a huge operation.

Although the Lebanese government had insisted formally and publicly that the multi-national forces which entered Beirut to oversee the evacuation of the PLO should stay in the capital 'until the end of the month', the forces began pulling out before the mandate expired. The Americans were the first to leave. The Italians were second. On Tuesday morning the last French soldier left Lebanon. On Tuesday afternoon Bashir Gemayel was assassinated.

His death has thrown Lebanon once again into total chaos and potential disaster. The fear now is that the civil war – which has in effect not ceased – will openly erupt again. A prolonged occupation by Israel of most of Lebanon, following their entry into West Beirut on Wednesday, is the most immediate danger. In particular, it is feared that the Israeli forces might do a deal with a Lebanese army officer to take over the parts which are under Lebanese control north of the Litani river.

According to sources in Beirut, Gemayel last week rejected the threats of Israel defence minister Sharon to destabilise his

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regime 'if he does not prepare the ground for a separate peace treaty with Israel by the end of the year'. Gemayel was reported to have answered that such a development could only take place through a referendum or 'a constitutional process'.

According to the constitution, the Speaker of the House, Kamel Al-As'ad, who is on holiday in Switzerland, is authorised to convene parliament and elect a new President before 23 September.

The meeting may also modify the constitution and extend the term of the outgoing President, Elias Sarkis. Gemayel's assassination has thrown the country into an unprecedented constitutional vacuum which has to be filled within the next few days. The deadlock makes a military takeover with total Israeli support quite plausible. □

Mustapha Karkouti is the London-based correspondent of the Lebanese Daily Assafir.

MIDDLE EAST 2

Fallout from Fez

FRED HALLIDAY looks at how the Arab world has been affected by the Lebanese war

WHEN KING Hassan of Morocco, host to last week's Arab summit conference on the Lebanon crisis, wanted to make himself clear on the most sensitive issue, he spoke in French. Point 7 of the summit statement on the Arab-Israeli conflict said that the UN Secretary Council would guarantee peace for *all* the states of the region, and the King's questioner wanted to know if this meant recognition of Israel.

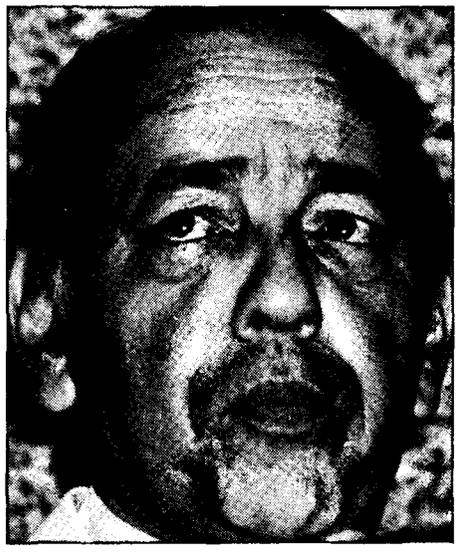
The King's reply was that Point 7 envisaged two stages. The first was the establishment of a state of non-belligerance between the countries of the region. The second was that of recognition. The Fez conference decisions were initially concerned with the first stage. But the message was clear enough: that, slowly but definitely, the Arab heads of state were willing to move towards recognition of Israel.

The most surprising thing about the Fez Summit was not so much that this should have been the decision, but that it was taken without major disagreement. Quite simply, the Israeli invasion of Lebanon had convinced the Arab leaders that they stood no military chance against the Israelis. With Khomeini beating on the Arab world's eastern gate, and Egypt committed to peace, they had no choice but to try the diplomatic path.

The PLO was among the delegations most insistent on this. The greatest resistance came from Syria. Yet the Syrians got some concessions from the other Arab states, so that the Fez terms were an improvement on the Fahd peace plan, rejected by the Arab summit last year.

The involvement of the UN Security Council in the negotiations is a way of bringing the Soviet Union back into regional diplomacy. And, while the conference called for the withdrawal of Syrian forces from Lebanon, this was made conditional on an Israeli withdrawal at the same time. The PLO also got some modifications of the original plan in its favour: it was recognised as the representative of the Palestinians and Jerusalem was named as the capital of the future Palestinian state.

THE PROBLEMS at the conference came from other Middle Eastern issues which intersect with the Arab-Israeli issue. The question of Lebanon looms large on the horizon; everyone had been expectant but uncertain about what policies President-elect Gemayel would pursue when he came to office on 23 September. The Fez summit was keen to ensure that Gemayel would not sign a peace treaty with Israel: and the Lebanese delegate was proud to announce that his country was a democracy where such measures could only be taken by majority will. There would be no such majority, he said, and none of the 99.9 per cent majorities seen in other Arab states – a reference to the referendum whereby Sadat sought to legitimise his agreement with Israel. (With the assassination of Gemayel this week the delegate's pride in his country's democracy must be a little shaken.)



Camera Press

Hassan – the harassed host

The Lebanon war has also left a rift between the PLO and the state that appears to be its closest ally, Syria. Syrian President Assad seems to resent the way in which the PLO leader left Beirut for Athens, rather than Damascus, as well as the decision to set up PLO headquarters in Tunis. Alone of the heads of state attending the conference, Assad refused to go to the airport to welcome Yasser Arafat. 'We fought side by side with the Palestinians in Lebanon. The rest of you did nothing. You need Arafat's blessing. I do not'. Assad declined to meet Arafat throughout the conference, but most of the Palestinian fighters and infrastructure are now in Syria and sooner or later the breach will be healed.

Assad was also at the centre of another inter-Arab dispute that preoccupied the conference, namely the dispute between Syria and Iraq. The two heads of state, Presidents Assad and Saddam Hussein, met for a long lunch, during which their Moroccan host repeatedly told them to stop quarrelling like a divorced couple. The Syrians have agreed to unblock the pipeline that brings Iraqi oil to the Mediterranean and the two countries will now reopen their frontiers Presumably, Assad and Saddam will also stop organising hit squads to try to assassinate each other.

Behind the Syrian-Iraqi dispute lies the issue of Iran. The Syrians signed the Fez statement which declared support for Iraq and the Tehran press has been quick to denounce the whole summit for its willingness to negotiate over Israel. This has challenged the Syrian-Iranian alliance upon which Iran has relied for the past two years. There seems to be a note of caution in Khomeini's statements on the Iran-Iraq war now: and he says that Iran does not want to occupy Iraqi cities. But some of his military commanders are talking of a new offensive later in the month. The defection of Syria may confirm the view that Iran must now compromise on its war with Iraq, but it may also discredit those in Tehran who argue that a solution could be found by encouraging Arab diplomacy.

The question of Egypt was largely avoided by the Fez summiteers. The Saudis blocked an attempt to vote funds for a permanent new Arab League headquarters in Tunisia, the implication being that it might soon be possible to move back to Cairo. And the Egyptian decision to freeze commercial ties with Israel at their present level was well received. Again, while the PLO was keen on normalising relations with Egypt, Syria held out for more time. 'This Mubarak is such a cold man,' Assad is reported to have said. 'He just goes from his home to his office, and then back home again. Let him do something else first'.

THE CONFERENCE marked a step forward – towards an Arab position that was united (Qaddafi of Libya excepted) and towards one that was realistic about the permanence of Israel and the balance of forces in the region. But it is far too early to say if this development, coupled with Reagan's initiative, will in fact yield any major movement. There is dissension in Palestinian ranks with what is seen as Arafat's excessively compliant conduct since the evacuation of Beirut, and, if things do not develop, Arab states like Syria and Iraq will be quick to make capital out of the PLO's difficulties by urging a 'steadfast', i.e. obstructive, policy. PLO leaders seem willing to accept some federation with Jordan, as proposed by Reagan, but support for this may ebb. The Israeli leaders for their part are showing little interest in meeting the Arab world on the terrain of diplomacy. They must be hoping that the intransigents will gain the upper hand again in Arab councils.

Perhaps the biggest question mark hangs over the determination of the US administration to push Israel into major concessions. Israel still commands the support of about three-quarters of the US electorate. It would be a gift for a 1984 Democratic candidate to run on a pro-Israeli ticket against Reagan or his Republican successor. The battle will be conducted in the precincts of New York and Los Angeles, as much as in the streets of Beirut, or the conference halls of Fez. □

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DIARY

Greg Chamberlain

Moscow

'WE'VE got an apron ready for you,' joked ground control to Svetlana Savitskaya, the world's second woman in space, as she spun around the earth the other week with two male colleagues. 'I hope you feed us first,' she quipped back.

The Western hacks here loved it. Out flowed long features about how working Soviet women are still having a pretty sexist time of it under socialism – what with drunken husbands and endless queueing for barely-available, high-priced, bad quality fruit and veg and for just about everything else. Clumsy old Ivan had fallen on his face again.

Muscovites don't give a hoot about The Pipeline – not that they hear much about it except on the Beeb or VOA. The talk is about food. The loudly-trumpeted food programme (to end the queues) finally got going four months ago. But who believes anything will come of it? The inertia of the twilight of Brezhnevism hangs over everything. The old man's jaw ailment even makes it hard for him to pronounce the word 'socialism' any more.

○

Could 'young' Andropov (68), currently the crown prince, turn around a decade of ever-growing corruption and cynicism? It's said he's charmed by Hungary, every Russian's favourite Eastern Bloc country, and its well-stocked shops and extra freedoms. (As Soviet ambassador in 1956, incidentally, he presided over the invasion of Hungary by Russia's well-stocked tanks.)

Maybe. As ex-boss of the KGB (which really does, alone among government departments, advertise itself in the phonebook as 'open for enquiries round the clock'), Andropov might be able somehow to sort out the maddening bureaucrats who anger a lot of Russians, causing them to reminisce about the 'good old days' of Uncle Joe which half of them can't remember. It rankles that you're banned, as a Soviet citizen, from shopping in the only places without queues and with decent goods, the Beriozka hard currency chain for foreigners.

○

How should socialists judge the Soviet Union? 'Not enough time yet' can't wash any more. Neither will it do just to observe that a ferocious secret police, censorship and food shortages have been the lot of Russians since time immemorial. Do visiting Tankies ask the non-party member factory worker (i.e. most of them) about such things before smugly flying back to their Western comforts and pluralisms?

If Thatcherism and Reaganomics equal the failure of capitalism, persistent consumer deprivation must raise *some* questions about socialism. 'The system will continue forever,' a gloomy Sergei Petrov told me, only a few weeks out of a failed 53-day hunger strike aimed at getting an exit visa to join his wife in the USA. But for all his despair and anger, he did concede that the Soviet answer to unemployment (it's officially zero) – giving everyone a title and a workplace, even if there's no work when they get there – might be better than having 3.3 million people going quietly crazy at the shame of being officially declared useless in Thatcherite Britain. A try, anyway, at maintaining the morale of the workforce.

○

Russians have a touching honesty and civic sense. The trams and trollies in Moscow (and elsewhere) cost only 2p for any distance (in Leningrad you can ride as many as 20 miles for that), but most passengers, and not all of them old, take great care to drop their kopecks into the unattended farebox. The spirit of socialism? Or just small-town decency?

Whatever it is, the city's transport system does put you in a good mood, especially the palatial Metro – all marble, chandeliers and heroic socialist mosaics, and working like a dream. A woman scolded me for crushing a couple of flowers as I sat on a concrete tub of them at a street corner. People come up and tell you not to sit on stone steps – piles, they say. The fizzy-drink machines in all public places have one glass which each user rewashes, and which is rarely stolen. And you can lose your licence if you don't keep your car clean.

○

'Ouagadougou with rockets,' Western residents jeeringly like to call Moscow. Yet students and visitors from the Third World must feel somewhat at ease here: the same old ironies and privations as back home (even down to mosquitoes), but with a sizeable dash of technology – except, that is, for things like the ancient motorcycles with sidecars and their begoggled riders straight out of the 1940s. An impressive amount of new housing, yet try to get an anaesthetic for an abortion without slipping 40 quid under the table.

○

I went to the village in the forest outside Moscow allotted to members of the official writers' union. Even there you must pass on Western newspapers with care. At Pasternak's graveside, I got a harangue about how the English have never understood the great man's poetry from an old history teacher who said he trekked out from the city once a week to cut the grass and keep things tidy.

○

How the Russians tend their past! The government has just spent £470 million restoring the Tsar's folly-filled Summer Palace at Petrodvoretz, outside Leningrad, from the ruins left by the Nazis. Strange, too, to see so many groups of young soldiers being guided round old churches and other unrevolutionary monuments. The continuity of Old Russia. The churches themselves seem full of fiercely protective little old ladies polishing lavish gold decorations.

○

Briefly to westward-looking Tallin, Estonia – 'the Finndrunk' someone called it, after the hordes of Finns who make the trip across the Baltic to drink vodka and drown their annoyance at their country's licensing hours. The KGB boss there is called, absurdly, August Pork and if you're a Russian, you won't find many helpful locals after 40 years of Soviet rule.

Back in Moscow and the imitation Berlin Wall at the American Embassy. US Marine guards stand behind the embassy gate, ready to receive. Soviet militiamen patrol in front of it, barring entry to Russians. After 65 years, is this *really* necessary for socialism?

ROGER WODDIS

Blind eye

'We just have to do certain things in this country to demonstrate our conviction that people have a right to join a church or a labour union or whatever else.' – William Brock, US special trade representative, on Reagan's Soviet gas pipeline sanctions.

Our attitude is crystal-clear
  Towards the Eastern bloc:
The mote that's in my brother's eye
  Looks larger than a rock;
The beam in mine is minuscule,
  As seen by William Brock.

The heel that tramples Polish necks
  Is red in tooth and claw,
But we can make the creature cringe
  And lift his martial law
By showing we refuse to yield
  And stamping on his paw.

It's toughest when you walk alone
  And no one understands:
The baddies may be just as bad,
  Or worse, in other lands,
But what the hell, it pays a man
  To keep his hired hands.

THIS ENGLAND

£3 book tokens for entries printed (on postcards, please).

☐ Our top-hats cost £380 each, but now, alas, we learn of a move afoot to replace them with economy toppers at £170. As an ex-sergeant major I believe that to cheapen the headgear of London's only surviving top-hatted police constables is as sacrilegious as taking away a guardsman's bearskin at the changing of the guard and giving him a stetson to wear because it's cheaper. – Letter in *The Times* (J. Q. C. Mackrell)

☐ A businessman who plans to turn a former Sunday School chapel into a brothel said he was doing it to help the unemployed. – *East Anglian Daily Times* (R. R. Pearce)

☐ Two women who arrived at Balmoral Castle demanding to see the queen have been committed to a mental hospital in Aberdeen. – *Daily Mirror* (John Christie)

☐ The Meteorological Office has cautiously predicted that weather forecasts may be more inaccurate next year. – *Guardian* (Liz Davies)

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LETTERS

Incomes policy

Donald Roy, London SW15

It is not true that an incomes policy (*NS* leader 10 September) is required to get to full employment unless one were to make the tautologous assumption (which I suspect the Treasury model does) that a level of unemployment below a certain figure (now two million?) leads unconstrained to ever-increasing inflation. If one were to use instead the alternative theory of wage determination (the 'target real wage growth' hypothesis), then it would be possible to project circumstances where a full employment policy could be shown not to be inconsistent with the retention of free collective bargaining.

What estimates and studies are available suggest that the 'worst case' real wage growth might be about 2 per cent p.a. from the 1979 level. Such a rate of growth could be accommodated within a balanced reflationary strategy (i.e. one that did *not* go for broke on unselective general reindustrialisation). It would be a tight fit, but it could be done.

Reforming the TUC

Leslie Moody, London SE3

It is not as easy as Patrick Wintour seems to think (*NS* 10 September) to identify the row over TUC General Council elections as White v Blue or Left v Right or Big v Small. The 'Blues' who supported the old system were joined by such impeccably 'White' unions as ASTMS and CPSA. The motion calling, in effect, for the preservation of a system allegedly favourable to the Left, was moved by Tony Christopher (IRSF), nobody's idea of a raving Leftie. While the old system was backed by the largest affiliate, TGWU, it was opposed by the scarcely small GMWU.

He is right, however, when he says that the supporters of the old system have only themselves to blame. With all its faults the system worked well enough so long as those who wielded the large block votes did so with some understanding of the sensibilities of Congress and with a genuine desire to elect a General Council that was truly representative of the broad spectrum that the unions affiliated to the TUC now form. It was their disregard of these important principles that led directly to the passing of the 1981 resolution and its reaffirmation in 1982.

Nobody can seriously defend a situation in Trade Group 17 (Professional, Executive and Entertainment) where the two seats are held by two of the smallest unions in the group (ACTT and the Musicians), *both* in entertainment, while the two largest unions in the group (APEX and BIFU), *both* representing professional and executive workers, are excluded.

This is not to say that the new system introduced by the 1981 and 1982 decisions has a great deal to commend it. The argument that it will get rid of the sin of patronage fails when it is recognised that the method of election for the smaller (under 100,000) unions is almost a replica of the present system but set on a smaller stage. Nevertheless, it is devoutly to be hoped that, the reformists having won the day at two successive congresses, the supporters of the old system will accept defeat gracefully. It may be trite to say it, but the TUC has some *real* issues to deal with, notably the Employment Bill, unemployment and low pay. An undignified squabble over who sits on the General Council, if it is repeated in 1983, will be a diversion that cannot do other than harm to the trade union movement and bring joy to Thatcher.

Postal ballots

Owen Wells, Ilkley, W. Yorks.

Mr Peter Fairbrother advances a subtle and interesting argument (Letters 3 September) that the election of union officers by a direct postal ballot of members is antipathetic to the direct involvement of members in their union. As a national officer of an admittedly small union that elects its officers by a postal ballot of all members I was faintly amazed.

In my union, the National Association of Probation Officers, 10-15 per cent of members regularly attend branch meetings, 15-20 per cent regularly attend our annual general meeting, and a large number of ordinary members are involved in our committees. I would not dream of arguing that this high level of members' participation is in any way related to the method of election of national officers. There are many other factors and one obvious one must be that it is much easier for members to feel a sense of commitment to and involvement in an organisation that numbers its members in thousands rather than millions.

However, in advancing his argument Mr Fairbrother gives no factual examples. I would argue that NAPO's practical experience shows up Mr Fairbrother's theoretical argument for the specious nonsense that it is.

For the record

Joan Abse, London NW11

In the course of his review of another book (*NS* 3 September) Nick Shrimpton makes certain criticisms of my biography of John Ruskin – *John Ruskin: The Passionate Moralist*. In so doing he impugns my integrity, saying that because of my 'desperate wish' to make Ruskin's views coincide with my own I rewrote Ruskin texts. I hope I may be allowed to reply.

Nick Shrimpton says that Ruskin used the phrase 'Soldiers of the Ploughshare as well as Soldiers of the Sword' which is 'significantly different' from the phrase I employed to describe his views 'soldiers of the ploughshare not soldiers of the sword.' True, Ruskin did use the phrase Shrimpton cites on the two occasions he mentions. However, on a third occasion, in a lecture he gave to Oxford students in 1870 he said the following: 'I permit myself, therefore, to remind you of the watchword of all my earnest writings – "Soldiers of the Ploughshare, instead of Soldiers of the Sword."' Ruskin was no militarist and in straining at the text Nick Shrimpton misrepresents his arguments which are fairly characterised in a lecture he gave to military cadets in 1865 in which he suggested that there was truer duty in 'raising harvests, than in burning them, more in building houses than in shelling them'.

May I add that I had no desire to make Ruskin's views square with my own and I consider it absurd to identify so protean and complex a man with any orthodoxy be it of left, right or centre. My own views are also, I believe, not known to Nick Shrimpton. Certainly I can assure him that they were not, as he categorically states, 'absorbed from Harold Laski at LSE'. Being a student of Laski did not mean that one was imprinted with his views.

Information wanted

Andro Linklater has been commissioned by Chatto & Windus to write a biography of the late Sir Compton Mackenzie. He would like to hear from any readers who knew Sir Compton and would be particularly grateful for the chance to see any letters or documents which might help him towards a fuller understanding of Sir Compton's life and work. Contact Andro Linklater at Isle Martin, By Ullapool, Ross-shire IV26 2TN.

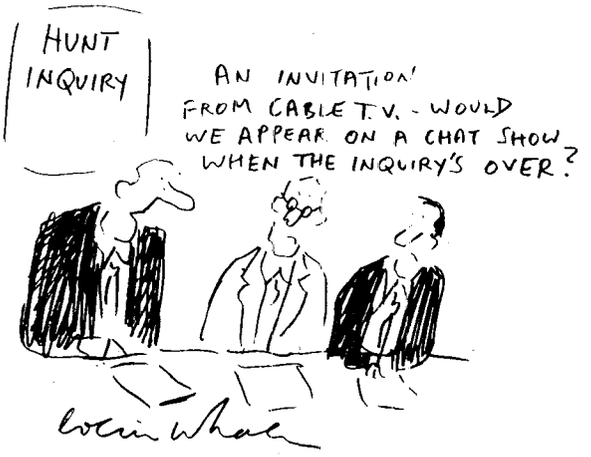
Public service broadcasting

Simon Partridge, 92 Hiddleston Road, London N7

You may have misquoted Richard Dennis of Rediffusion, but his correction is equally damning (Letters 10 September).

It reveals that he has absolutely no understanding of the concept of 'public service' as applied to broadcasting in the UK – i.e. a reasonably priced service, available to *all*, with a wide range of programming. Furthermore, he does not seem to grasp that all forms of broadcasting form a dynamic eco-system and that, willy-nilly, the introduction of entertainment-based cable TV will affect existing TV services, as will the introduction of Channel 4, breakfast TV and the forthcoming two BBC satellite channels.

As your report on cable TV 'Watch now, pay later' (same issue) makes clear, it is becoming increasingly obvious that private enterprise, aided and abetted by Kenneth Baker and the Department of Industry, has already decided to introduce ruthlessly *commercial* cable TV in the UK.



In my view it is nothing short of scandalous that such moves are taking place prior to the publication of the report of the Hunt Inquiry into Cable TV and a subsequent wide-ranging public debate.

But why should we accept such a *fait accompli* – with its grave implications for our existing public service broadcasting and telecommunications – lying down? I know it is not only George Howard who does not share the minister's enthusiasm – practically all the non-industrial submissions to Hunt have argued for more time in which to discuss this complex issue.

However, it is beginning to seem to me that the only thing which might halt the present mindless ministerial and commercial juggernaut is a widely based *Campaign Against Commercial Cable TV*. Perhaps interested readers could contact me.

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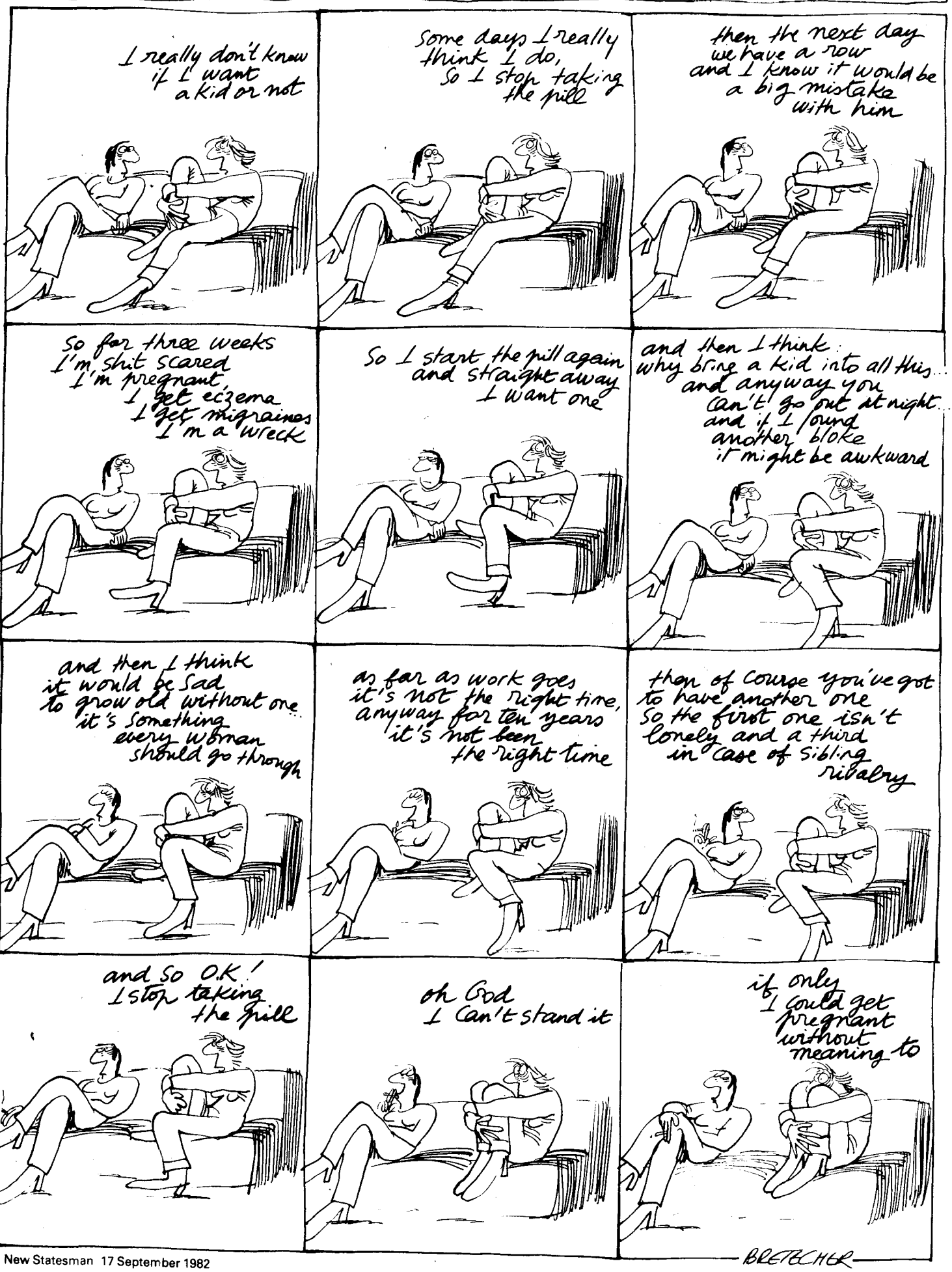
BRETECHER

NATURE'S CALL


I really don't know if I want a kid or not
Some days I really think I do, So I stop taking the pill
then the next day we have a row and I know it would be a big mistake with him
So for three weeks I'm shit scared I'm pregnant I get eczema I get migraines I'm a wreck
So I start the pill again and straight away I want one
and then I think: why bring a kid into all this... and anyway you can't go out at night... and if I found another bloke it might be awkward
and then I think it would be sad to grow old without one... it's something every woman should go through
as far as work goes it's not the right time, anyway for ten years it's not been the right time
then of course you've got to have another one so the first one isn't lonely and a third in case of sibling rivalry
and so O.K.! I stop taking the pill
oh God I can't stand it
if only I could get pregnant without meaning to
BRETECHER

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Orwelliana

BERNARD CRICK reviews the latest book about Orwell

TOSCO Fyvel, born in 1907, was thus only four years younger than Orwell. They met in 1940, just after Fyvel had returned from Palestine, bringing back Orde Wingate's gospel about the priority of political factors in war to the ears of an already receptive Orwell. Under Fred Warburg's auspices, together they edited a notable series on war aims, Searchlight Books, in which Orwell wrote *The Lion and the Unicorn*, thanks to Fyvel's friendly pressure. Fyvel also had a hand in bringing Orwell to *Tribune* and followed him there as literary editor. He is now literary editor of the *Jewish Chronicle*. This is a warm and interesting 'personal memoir' of 'ten years of friendship', or rather of a friendly acquaintance over a ten-year period during half of which Fyvel was either away at war or Orwell in Jura.

This combination of character sketch and critical assessment was once a flourishing literary genre. It reached its height in the Victorian and Edwardian era, but declined with the monthlies and quarterlies which alone could give the 5,000 to 15,000 words needed. It has now degenerated into the 1,000-word 'Profile' of the weekly press, or has to inflate itself into a full-blown book.

Fyvel's 80 pages on his own memories of Orwell are a warm and valuable document. The 40 pages of 'Appreciation' are shrewd, interesting and far from uncritical, although they mostly confirm, rather than add to, existing judgments. But the 90 pages, 'The Wandering Years', on Orwell before they met go over very familiar ground to reach familiar conclusions. Orwell compartmentalised his friends to an unusual degree and was abnormally reluctant to talk about himself. So little of the biographical section can arise from what Orwell said to Fyvel (or to anyone else), even leaving aside doubts about memory as such, and I'm more sceptical than Fyvel about the literal truth of Orwell's own autobiographical writings. There are two problems about them; firstly, Orwell is a more imaginative writer than many of his literary friends of the days of his fame allow – some still patronise him as a simple, rugged truth-teller (the late Sonia Orwell would protest that I was 'doubting his word' when I thought I *might* be reading a short story about a hanging, about shooting an elephant, or about prep school); and secondly, the so-called *Complete Essays, Journalism and Letters* are not complete. Sonia thought that much of his early journalism and some of the fulminations of his revolutionary socialist period from 1936-41 didn't come up to scratch; perhaps not, but they are part of his life.

'As for other sources', Fyvel writes that he 'read with interest' Peter Stansky and William Abrahams' two volumes and my own: 'While not necessarily agreeing with the picture of Orwell they presented, I have from all three books learned some details new to me about his life.' 'Some details' is an understatement. I cannot speak for Stansky and Abrahams, but I'm an easy fellow who believes in the republic of learning, *Areopagitica* and open government. I'm delighted that dull, detailed books get used and popularised; I only wish more accurately. For while any good writer can produce an excellent character sketch on even a brief meeting, biography (if it is not simply a novel based on fact) must contain true and well-documented detail of how someone actually led their life.

The biographical section of this book is littered with little errors. Streptomycin was not in common use when it was desperately tried on Orwell, it had not been clinically tested in Britain even and it took the combined power of David Astor and Nye Bevan to import it; and then Fyvel confuses it with Oreomycin, a quite different anti-biotic. Orwell's brother-in-law is given a 'temporary home' in Leeds, in which he lived for over 20 years; and his nephew is made an engineer rather than an income tax official. Richard Rees is the only person who was asked to visit Orwell in Jura: but Innes Holden, Paul Potts, his life-long friend Brenda Salkeld did so, and others, too. His aunt's husband is elevated to a 'professor of Esperanto', though he certainly professed it. More disputable, 'he was not very good at working with his hands'; well, I heard that often about Orwell's carpentry and gardening skills, but never from anyone who themselves had them. Most 1930s intellectuals were a helpless lot.

But what rubbishy detail to mention in a short review! Is this the *TLS*? I don't demur about, let me add to, indeed, the general praise for Fyvel's character sketch of Orwell; but I do observe that when people pad out a good essay into book length, their heart is often not in the padding. Detail can, however, be tendentious. A 'smoky grate' is introduced into a room in Jura where Orwell wrote *Ninteen Eighty-Four*, which had no grate; and even the 'smoky valor stove' solely depends on the testimony (I was careful to point out) of Orwell's rather tetchy brother-in-law, who by then had read and 'thoroughly agreed with' an early essay of Fyvel's about Orwell's going to Jura because of a 'death wish' (rather than wanting to get some writing done undisturbed).

The one thing that spoils, in my opinion, Fyvel's otherwise fine character sketch of Orwell is a residual, if now wisely more muted, Freudian prejudice that only a traumatic event in early life can explain genius. Facts will vary. Orwell was not Gissing. But Fyvel still hankers after believing that 'Such, Such Were the Joys' is literally true. Didn't Fyvel notice that among 'the detail' was the testimony of an old boy that it was another boy who was flogged for bed-wetting? This is as unverifiable as Orwell's own testimony or story. But tall theories should not be built on psychological sands.

Several reviewers have noted that Fyvel believes that Orwell's understanding of Hitlerism was less acute than his understanding of Stalinism and especially

George Orwell: A Personal Memoir by T. R. FYVEL *Weidenfeld* £9.95

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that he saw no earlier than most the connection between conventional anti-Semitism and genocide. This is a fair point; Fyvel is sad, shrewd and wise on Orwell's somewhat belated grasp of 'the Jewish question'; but Orwell was aware from 1936 onwards that Nazism was a mass movement, was a kind of 'negative socialism' (his friend Jack Common's phrase), not, as both Marxists and Tories thought it, the street-army of a capitalist elite. However, with all these carping reservations, this book now replaces Sir Richard Rees's *Orwell: a Fugitive from the Camp of Victory* as the best short, general introduction to Orwell's life and work for the general reader, though I hope Fyvel would not disagree with me if I say that it is a pity that both are not in print. George Woodcock's *Orwell: The Crystal Spirit* still remains the best account of him specifically as someone who wanted, in his own words, 'above all else' to make 'political writing into an art'. □

FICTION – 1: Harriett Gilbert

White mischief

An Ice Cream War by WILLIAM BOYD *Hamish Hamilton* £7.95
Maiden Rites by SONIA PILCER *Weidenfeld* £7.95
Myths of the Near Future by J. G. BALLARD *Cape* £6.95
Chronicles of Bustos Domecq by JORGE LUIS BORGES and ADOLFO BIOY-CASARES *Allen Lane* £7.50

> Lt. Col. Stordy says the war here will only last two months. It is far too hot for sustained fighting, he says, we will all melt like ice-cream in the sun!

'Here' was Nairobi, British East Africa, October 1914. The misinformed writer was one F. H. Burgess, in a letter predicting instant defeat for the 'squareheads' in German East Africa to his sister Cecily back home. This purportedly genuine missive is used as the prologue to William Boyd's second novel: partly, of course, as comic warm-up, but mainly because it encapsulates the simple-minded complacency that **An Ice Cream War** will explode to the corners of the earth.

The novel is set in the First World War and the period immediately preceding it: that golden summer of romantic love, high-minded cultural pursuits, and servants. While Africa tips its munificence into British and German laps, Felix Cobb of Stackpole Manor, in Kent, is giving his father apoplexy and himself intense satisfaction by preferring Oxford to the army, emerald-green shirts to Norfolk jackets and Socialism to God. In recreating the era, Boyd treads a literary tightrope. A story-teller's skill at emotional engagement must weigh each satirical excess, if the reader is not to escape into distanced, purely spectatorial amusement. Felix; his soldier brother Gabriel; Gabriel's young bride Charis; the civil servants, settlers and soldiers in Africa: these must absorb us while Boyd lays the charge against our own culpability.

Thanks to their author's delicacy, they do; with only a couple of slips. A bohemian London cocktail party topples towards literary cliché, while Charis's death is a clumsy, uconvincing narrative device. Charis and Gabriel's pre-war honeymoon, however, is a masterpiece of seemingly effortless, technically brilliant comedy; as are the scenes in which Felix's Oxford is reduced to a drear, sick joke by the constant presence of a suppurating cold sore on his lip. But it is the romance of *war* that Boyd wants to destroy, and the hideous chaos of the war in Africa (in which first Gabriel, then Felix, eventually become involved) is recreated with such a fine balance of satire, black comedy and horror that pleasure in Boyd's dexterity threatens to distract one from the shock of what he is saying. At the end of his first day of battle, Gabriel

> felt suddenly overcome by a desire to sleep . . . Bilderbeck sneered. He took out his map from his pocket . . . 'Coconut groves', it said in large letters. The phrase sounded pleasant, restful. It gave no indication of the tangled choking undergrowth they had clawed their way through at noon.

An Ice Cream War denies the usefulness of anything except the moment (the sudden surge of love for a brother; the glimpse of a glistening woman, bathing, through a window), its explosives laid, not only beneath colonialism, jingoism and elitism, but every actual or potential social structure. Not since Evelyn Waugh has there been a British comic novelist of such dazzling, desperate nihilism.

Sonia Pilcer still hopes. The optimism of **Maiden Rites** is as obvious in the writing as it is in the heroine's parting cry to her psychologically hypochondriac lover: 'No. I'm never going to be that way.' Hannah Wolfe of Flushing, New York, is Portnoy's female cousin: a nice Jewish girl (whose mother inspects her laundry for stains) who yearns to lose her virginity to an Ivy League, baseball-playing goy. She loses it to Moshe Wozinsky, a balding, paranoid, megalomaniac Columbia drop-out.

The story structure is familiar: a journey through the minefields of sex, love and parental confrontation to womanhood. What separates it from a mass of plodding introspections is its humour, and its subtlety. Surprises are sprung with confidence, the best being Moshe's failure to become one jot more pleasant as the story proceeds. Pilcer's narrative vocabulary is a casserole of pop-song lyrics, pop psychology and gobbets of the half-digested culture students enjoy spewing up. The chaos, however, is perfectly controlled. Slowly, surely, there emerges from it an unequivocal demand that women get off their submissive backs and assert their sexual/emotional needs. A simplistic message, certainly; but one that is conveyed with style, ingenuity and wit.

J. G. Ballard must be Britain's most highly esteemed science-fiction writer, his preference for 'psychology' over 'technology' extending his following way beyond the usual ranks of SF fans. In **Myths of the Near Future,** a collection of ten short stories, he continues his exploration of the human mind: a mind in the process of disintegration from having travelled too far, too fast, from Nature. For Ballard, technological progress is sin. Sheppard, searching for his dead wife in the forests around Cape Kennedy; Franklin, stepping into longer and longer 'fugues' of frozen unconsciousness; Pangborn, trying to murder himself: for each, salvation can only come from some mystic rediscovery of birds, of the sun . . . of God? For all his prodigious powers of invention, visual evocation and symbolism, Ballard incites more admiration than empathy.

The same could be said of Borges, although for different reasons. What *he* believes in is anyone's guess: unless it be the fun to be gained from words, from language, from literature. In **Chronicles of Bustos Domecq** (published in Argentina in '67 and written with Adolfo Bioy-Casares, with whom he also collaborated on *Six Problems for Don Isidro)* he achieves the remarkable literary coup of ridiculing two different styles (art-for-art's-sake modernism and flatulent pseudo-academicism) by discussing the first in the second. The joke wears thin before the end of the book; but the essay on the novelist who devotes six volumes to describing one corner of his desk, or the literary critic for whom the only valid review of a poem is a word-for-word, comma-for-comma transcription: such creations are Borges at his fine preposterous best. □

Michael Hofmann

Body heat

(for Caroline)

This evening belongs to a warmer day –
separated clouds, birds, bits of green . . .
We wake late, naked, stuck to each other:
the greenhouse effect of windows and bedclothes.

Fifty years late, you finish *Love on the Dole.*
– Who knows, perhaps it can really be done?
The Boots hair-setting gel no longer works;
your pecker is down. The underdog's leather jacket

is here to stay, the stubborn lower lip
of the disconsolate punk . . . The poor hedgehogs,
they must help each other to pull off the leaves
that covered them while they were hibernating.

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FICTION – 2: Maria Couto

On the road

Monsignor Quixote by GRAHAM GREENE
Bodley Head £5.95

What was a paradox in the Thirties when Orwell called Greene our first Catholic fellow-traveller appears to have been resolved in Greene's latest novel. Most of Greene's fiction presents faith as a mode of action towards self-realisation. The landscape of the novels is a microcosm of the world delineated with clear perceptions of historical process. These implications are half concealed in the beguiling qualities of his story-telling, for Greene above all believes in entertaining his readers; yet the underlying concern with the whole business of living in a world where political developments dominate or destroy individual life has been increasingly apparent in the last few novels. There is a thematic integration of personal faith with political struggle in *The Honorary Consul,* which exposes the complicity of the US in the repressive dictatorships of Latin America; and this theme is given a different shading in *The Human Factor* to suggest the link between the policy of apartheid in South Africa and the survival of capitalism. In *Monsignor Quixote* Greene steps out into the open to look at faiths that have influenced him and the world.

The novel's protagonists are Monsignor Quixote, 'a poor priest errant travelling God knows where', and Enrique Zancas (alias Sancho), the ex-Mayor of El Tobozo, and avowedly a Communist. Together they set off on a journey to escape from an authoritarian Bishop and the election victory of a right-wing opponent. They discourse along the way on life's constraints and its possibilities for freedom, aided by wholesome country wine and cheese, and disturbed by intrusions in equal measure from the Guardia Civil and members of Opus Dei. Their discussions contain some of the wisdom, verve and good humour of their literary ancestors, perhaps with a few subconscious echoes of the conversations of Father Brown.

What emerges from this homespun combination is not ideology and orthodoxy but life viewed in its pristine beauty and bounty. Everyone's right to the simple and good things of life is stated in an effective combination of superbly funny episodes reminiscent of *Travels With My Aunt.* Underlying the hilarity this time there is a conscious setting of idea against an instinct for human needs, of theological argument against faith that transcends it.

The novel is thus an account of a friendship that survives and deepens despite the gulf that theoretically separates the fellow travellers. As they meander across the countryside of a remote district of Spain each interprets the beliefs and texts of the other in relation to close-to-the-soil experiences. A tongue-in-cheek juxtaposition of the Gospels, the breviary and the Communist Manifesto, the Roman Curia and the Politburo, the Protestant and the Euro-Communist, Torquemada and Stalin, the Cross and the Hammer and Sickle, creates a devastating blend of humour and sharp insight. Greene succeeds admirably in what he felt G. K. Chesterton was trying to do:

> He restated original thought with the freshness, simplicity, and excitement of discovery. In fact, it was discovery: he unearthed the defined from beneath the definitions, and the reader wondered why the definitions had been thought necessary.

The quibbles of moral theology and ideological theory that speak with certitude of unlived rules come in for merciless ridicule. Pressing questions such as birth control are faced with candour and without the spiritual agonising of Greene's earlier fiction:

> 'The Church can alter its mind about what concerns money much more easily than it can about what concerns sex . . . With us the dogmas which are mostly difficult to alter are just those that deal with money . . . We don't worry about 'coitus interruptus', only about the means of production – I don't mean sexually.'

In offering Monsignor Quixote a peep into the world of pornographic films (which he survives with commendable panache) the narrative reflects the life-denying restrictions of moral theology and a soul-destroying permissiveness that equally conspire to kill human relationships; but the most refreshing aspect of this novel is that Catholicism is examined as a way of life led by a man riddled by doubts:

> 'I am sure of nothing, not even of the existence of God. but doubt is not treachery as you Communists seem to think. Doubt is human. Oh, I want to believe that it is all true – and that want is the only certain thing I feel.'

He believes that a true Communist is a sort of priest, and that Marx had his books of chivalry too. In fact the bond between the fellow travellers is strengthened by a shared doubt and the implicit awareness that their respective faiths have 'not done away with either nationalism or imperialism. It's these two that cause the wars. Wars are not merely for economic reasons – they come from the motions of men, like love does, from the colour of the skin, or the accent of a voice. From unhappy memories too'.

The narrative labours the point when Greene introduces the trappings of faith – confession, the procession where the Virgin's robes are pinned with paper money 'and right over the heart a hundred dollar bill'. Here he betrays his unfortunate penchant for religious accoutrements, distracting us from the issues raised. Its most moving section is the final one which illustrates the irrational leap that is faith, a leap that blurs the distinction between faith and fiction. Greene's subversion of orthodoxy and ideology will be seen by many as mere liberal concern; yet it must be remembered that it was in 1938, after a visit to Mexico, that he first wrote, 'The Catholic Church has to learn the language of revolution'. If his fellow-travelling has been uneasy it has also been persistent. □

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RUSSIA: Olga Semenova

Loyal opposition

An End to Silence: Uncensored Opinion in the Soviet Union edited by STEPHEN F. COHEN *W. W. Norton* £14.25

This is a collection of articles from *Political Diary*, a samizdat magazine edited by Roy Medvedev, which came out monthly from 1964 to 1971. It lasted for such a long time because of its tiny circulation and particular orientation. Five copies only of each issue were typed and distributed to a select readership of 40 or 50. It was an internal discussion document, written by and for liberal-minded Party members and Establishment intellectuals. The journal was started immediately after Krushchev's overthrow amid fears that the new leaders would abandon his anti-Stalinist reforms. The idea was to create a Party pressure group, which would act as a loyal opposition and work for democratisation of the system.

As time passed, all the samizdat documents that could be found were added as appendices, and *Political Diary* grew to an enormous size. The selections were made by Stephen Cohen, best known as author of *Bukharin and the Russian Revolution*, on the theme of anti-Stalinism. The articles deal with the exposure of 'Stalin's crimes'; the survival of Stalinism and Stalinists; criticism of different aspects of the Soviet system; the reaction of liberal Party members to Czechoslovakia; and their proposals for reform. Some give a fascinating picture of the Soviet bureaucracy, thrown into dissarray by Krushchev's speeches. Others show the fantastic give and take that went on – former victims attacking their persecutors, their persecutors defending themselves. They reveal a multiplicity of different groups and opinions within the Party. The later documents, however, make clear the limits of Medvedev's liberalism. At the time the journal was started, many prominent intellectuals believed in the possibility of reforming the system from within. Medvedev was the only one who stuck to this idea after the clamp-down in Soviet life, the arrests of dissidents and the invasion of Czechoslovakia.

The extracts only go up to 1970 and are centred around Krushchev's rise and fall, which took place 18-20 years ago. This makes them historically rather than politically interesting. In his introductory article, Cohen rightly gives an excellent short account of Krushchev and de-Stalinisation. He also makes a valiant attempt to link *Political Diary* to the Soviet present. This hinges on his discussion of the survival of Stalinism in the Soviet Union today. It is less than successful because he fails to define exactly what he means by Stalinism. The question of authoritarian versus reformer in the Party is of extreme contemporary relevance, as the issue of Brezhnev's succession looms ever nearer, but whether the labels 'Stalinist' and 'Anti-Stalinist' still apply is more dubious. □

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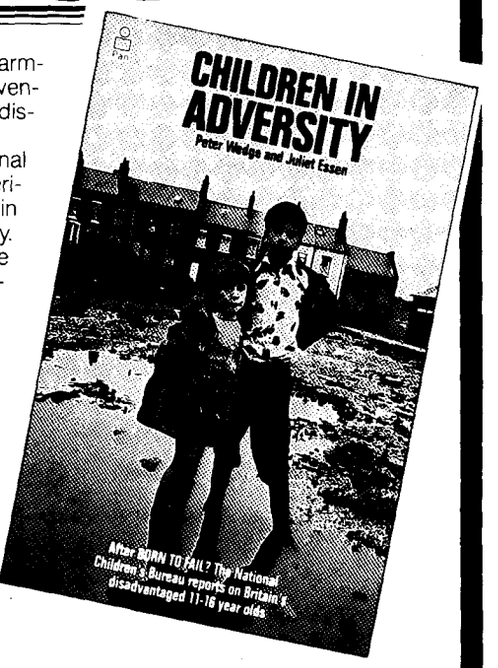
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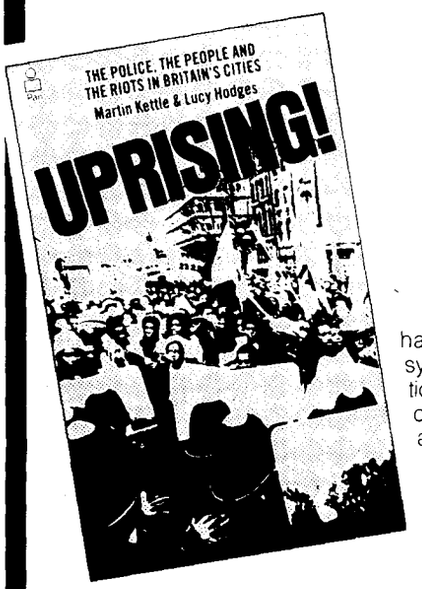

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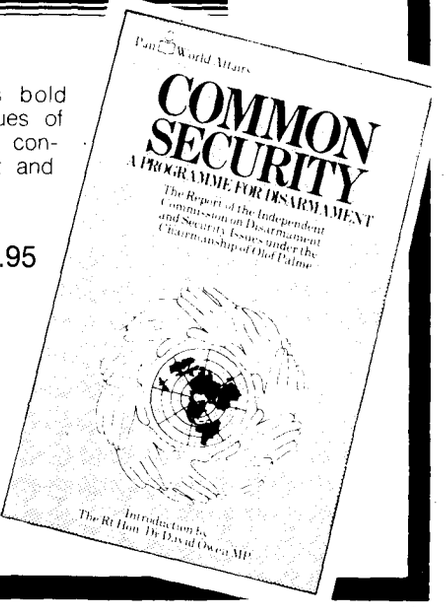
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Shorter reviews

A-Z of Trade Unionism and Industrial Relations by JACK JONES and MAX MORRIS *Heinemann* £6.95

Books on industrial relations tend to be abstract and wordy. This book is not so. But then how could it be? The authors – Jack Jones, former General Secretary of the TGWU and Max Morris, executive member and former President of the NUT – are both men of immense practical experience.

Dictionaries, encyclopedias and gazetteers are always the most useable forms of information for the busy journalist, the teacher and, in this case, the everyday trade union official, manager and employer. The TGWU has, very wisely, already ordered 10,000 copies of the book. However, as the publishers claim, this *A-Z* is more than a dictionary. It is a 'sociological document' which touches upon innumerable aspects of industry, trade unionism, labour law, employment protection, social welfare and social benefits, some economics and history, etc.

As you would expect, it contains information about the right to strike, the right to take sympathetic action in support of other strikers, and related matters. The law is being changed, of course, under the present government, but trade unionists on strike are already not immune from those laws under which they may be charged with 'obstructing the highway' or 'causing a breach of the peace'. Furthermore, no trade unionists are immune when an employer seeks an injunction to restrain them from doing something that may be unlawful. And it is likely that employers may increasingly invoke such injunctions. Use of injunctions has been fairly common practice in the Republic of Ireland where basic trade union law, such as the acts of 1871 and 1906, applies as in Britain.

The publication of this book was nicely timed to coincide with the annual Trades Union Congress, and indeed – though perhaps less intentionally – with the opening of the academic year in colleges of further education.

Andrew Boyd

The Blyton Phenomenon by SHEILA RAY *Deutsch* £10.95

There is an interesting book to be written about Enid Blyton, but this isn't it. Sheila Ray devotes her time less to discussing Blyton's context in children's literature than to recounting the monumentally tedious transactions of librarians. This is a work, therefore, not of literary criticism but of bibliography, the success of an author being evaluated in terms of statistics. This is the core of the Blyton phenomenon. Her books are execrable yet they sell in huge quantities. For the librarian this engenders great anguish. Should the public be given what it wants or is the librarian to be an arbiter of literary merit?

Enid Blyton's devotees claim that she encourages children to read for fun and that her racy stories ease the child towards maturer things – the secret seven tracking down villains will take the reader to Jane Austen's Bennet family stalking husbands. The Blyton detractors, on the other hand, claim that the books are poorly written, self-regarding and snooty. The moppet fans just engorging other Blytons (and there are hundreds of them) instead of escaping to the fresh air of the classics.

What Ray fails to see is that both are correct. The engaging stories and atrocious language, the content and form of a Blyton book do not run counter to each other but mesh to provide an inadvertent image of the tawdry, flashy world into which the child will later be ejected. The tackiness of the medium reflects the inanity of the message, and to have accomplished this balance is Blyton's hidden genius.

Ray's book, woefully stemming from an academic thesis, is acned with footnotes and references. *Treasure Island,* in case we've forgotten, is 'one of the most famous and widely read children's classics'. A book which viewed Blyton in relation to the tradition of Isaac Watts, Blake, Dickens, Stevenson and Belloc would have been more interesting, for she did not emulate her progenitors so much as travesty them.

Roger Lewis

Energy Policy: Britain's Electricity Industry by MARTIN INCE *Junction Books* £5.95

The problem with books about subjects like energy policy is that they can be very dull to read – even if you happen to be one of those who is fascinated by, or employed by, the electricity industry. Authors' technical literacy does not automatically imply literary competence. Happily Martin Ince is a technologist who can write well – sometimes very well. He makes judicious use of facts and examples to support his clear and powerful argument and spices his narration with occasional and welcome bursts of humour. The result is a readable, insightful and damning indictment of conventional energy thinking and an important primer for the anti-nuclear power activist.

The electricity industry, he argues, is at the centre of energy policy, not the oil industry. He shows how the enormous political muscle of the power plant industry has led to a series of irrational decisions – to order the Drax B coal station early and to order the nuclear stations at Torness and Heysham at all.

The industry, in one memorable phrase, is afflicted by an 'arthritis of scale'. Because of its dependence on fewer and larger generating units it is facing an unprecedented crisis which requires radical solutions. The conventional answer – the development of nuclear power including fast reactors – is scathingly compared with a range of new fossil-fuel-based technologies such as fluidised bed combustion, combined heat and power, combined cycle generation and magnetohydrodynamics (all of which are clearly explained). In order to combat the enormous influence of the nuclear power lobby, Ince commends (sometimes without much conviction) some institutional reforms such as the establishment of a National Heat Board.

The book contains a good analysis of trade union approaches to energy policy which are described as 'astonishingly cynical'. The official TUC view, as expressed by their Fuel and Power Industries Committee, does not inspire confidence. The committee, in its 1981 review, was committed to an even more massive nuclear power programme than is the Tory government.

Rob Edwards

The Man Who Was Vogue: The Life and Times of Condé Nast by CAROLINE SEEBOHM *Weidenfeld* £12.50

In the heyday of Art Deco and the Ballets Russes, the *beau monde* of New York flocked to a sumptuous penthouse in Park Avenue, where legendary hospitality was dispensed, in the manner of Jay Gatsby, by an enigmatic publisher.

For Condé Nast, the *tableaux vivants* of distinguished guests framed in his decor provided the stock-in-trade of *Vogue, Vanity Fair* and *House and Garden.* He recorded the attendance of celebrities at his parties as meticulously as he baited the editorial content of his magazines, with the avowed intent of delivering to his advertisers only those rich or aspiring customers who could afford quality goods. (Fiction was always avoided on the grounds of its indiscriminate and therefore unprofitable appeal to all classes of reader including the indigent.)

Born in 1873 and helped through college by an aunt who had married an industrialist, Nast entered business management at a propitious moment. New products were transforming the home. New plutocrats sought guidance on the arts of gracious living. Even Mrs Theodore Roosevelt relied on the Vogue Pattern Service.

As an arbiter of taste, Nast was prudently flexible. His innovations – organisational, technical and aesthetic – kept pace with the investors' bonanza. He hired *avant-garde* artists of world renown; launched journals in London, Paris, Berlin and Madrid; ventured down-market with the Hollywood inspired *Glamour;* founded a model printing press, and ceaselessly updated the presentation of fashion.

Nast's success as a trend-setting tycoon is not in doubt. His *Vogue* was, in the words of the photographer Steichen, 'tops for swank'. He got his sums right, at least until the Wall Street Crash. But his biographer credits him with nobler qualities. Modesty is betokened by the millionaire's taste for hamburgers and ice-cream; tenderness by Nast's desire to get his grandson's buck teeth fixed; passion by the predatory pouncing of the office pasha on an endless succession of replaceable girls.

By the time Nast's fortune collapses with the Stock Market Caroline Seebohm's normally crisp prose has become sodden with sycophancy, and there seems every reason to accept Edmund Wilson's verdict on his erstwhile employer: 'obnoxious vulgarity . . . the glossiest bounder I ever knew.'

Marion Glastonbury

Disability in Britain edited by ALAN WALKER with PETER TOWNSEND *Martin Robertson* £9.95 & £3.50

Disability is a book in the best Fabian social policy tradition, a clarion call by liberal experts on behalf of people with disabilities (with one chapter by disabled people themselves – awful sagas of bureaucratic delay and administrative meanness). It separates the 'disabled' into differing groups with specific needs – elderly people, children, women – and then reunites them, rightly arguing that classifications which stress their differences weaken and divide them.

Unequivocally, and in the formal, steady prose starched by a decade of detailed pressure-group research, the various authors show how people with disabilities are also poor people (the greater the degree of disability, the poorer they become) and probably unemployed people. They compare the promise of the Chronic and Disabled Persons Act with its performance, look at the issue of cash versus services and at the scandalous current attempts by the Manpower Services Commission to abolish the quota system (which obliges employers to take on a certain percentage of employees with disabilities), ineffectual only because unenforced.

The book rejects the present piecemeal system of benefits in favour of a comprehensive disability income, a suggestion supported by public opinion polls. Yet it doesn't pause to ask why we have the present patchwork system, and suffers from the problems endemic to social policy research in its pre-occupation with the minutiae of benefits and minor changes in practice and its myopia over more structural issues.

Anne Karpf

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TELEVISION: William Boyd

Seeing is believing

Singing along in 'Nuts in May'

MIKE LEIGH's films are so good because he understands the medium that he's working in so well. Last week I discussed the differences between Realism and Naturalism, whether Leigh was a realist or not, whether his films borrowed from both modes and so on. The distinctions to be made are fine ones, but perhaps only come down to academic niceties because in the end we are talking about a property common to almost anything we see on television. Something about the medium, something about its ubiquity in contemporary life, confers on every dramatised or fictional work an overriding air of verisimilitude. Indeed, perhaps that's the best word to stick with. Things look real, pictures borrow an illusion of reality irrespective of their content, style or whatever editorial or directorial trickery has gone into the making of them.

And yet few forms are as unrealistic as television or film when one thinks of the way they're put together: cross-cutting, fades, mixing, editing – all the 'tools' of the trade, so to speak – scarcely parallel the kind of visual world we all possess. Yet this artificiality doesn't work against the feeling of verisimilitude. We are all – we feel – spectators gaining privileged access to a sequence of other worlds, all by virtue of the medium, imbued with a sense of reality so powerful that, I would suggest, it's well nigh unshakeable. At the back of it lies a notion perhaps best expressed as 'the camera never lies'. Words, paint or marble are manifestly *not* the things they claim to be presenting. Photographic images are a different matter. Ocular proof – 'I saw it with my own eyes' – has always been the most convincing testimony. And it's exactly this quality that television and film trade on so effectively. Some artists in the medium quite naturally find this a constraint and seek to tamper with the form. But Mike Leigh, I would surmise, is entirely happy with this state of affairs. He sees verisimilitude as a powerful ally.

The three films we saw in last week's extremely welcome and enjoyable season on BBC-2 were a good illustration of the work. (I'm excluding *Abigail's Party*: conceived as a stage play it can't fairly be included with the films.) *Nuts in May* was the most light hearted, *Who's Who* the most unstructured and episodic. They both brought about the uncanny sense of being invisible watchers of other people's private lives but didn't have the impact and shapeliness of the impressive *Grown Ups* where all the Mike Leigh ingredients – superb acting, gimlet-eyed observation, cringing embarrassment *and* comment – came together with wonderful fidelity.

Leigh is often criticised for appealing to our worst instincts: it is suggested that residual snobbery and a sense of superiority are responsible for the laughs or the frisson the plays produce. The charge can be denied on one count at least by pointing to the range of targets he's selected. Leigh has, as the three films demonstrated, turned his gaze on all classes and types, from vegetarians to PE teachers, from young stock-brokers to sales assistants. His even-handedness thus established, he's surely free to concentrate on whatever social stratum his inclination or his story demands. But in many respects it is the very existence of this sort of criticism – along the 'We don't want to know about such people' school – that shows his films are achieving the desired effect. As Leigh himself stated in the *Arena* profile, his films are 'morality plays'. He is interested in making statements about the kind of lives people lead and the way they behave towards each other. Like Thoreau, Leigh is of the opinion that most lives are characterised by 'quiet desperation' rather than by anything more uplifting or homely. It seems to be a conclusion that latterly he is becoming more inclined to underscore if *Grown Ups* and the bleak *Home Sweet Home* are any guide. Any edginess or unease prompted by his observations can only be a sign that certain truths are too uncomfortable for some critics to acknowledge. Ostrich-complexes are easily fostered; complacency is a very tolerable state of mind. Leigh's telling rejoinders to the opposite effect are immensely valuable in a medium that has done its share to promote the bland, the neutral and the inconsequential.

But it's as well to remind ourselves of the other facets of the plays: the marvellous performances Leigh gets from his actors; his consummate exploitation of the comedy of embarrassment. This is something else that television aids: because we feel like invisible watchers in a Mike Leigh film, when we see something performed as though it were unobserved, we squirm all the more guiltily and enjoyably. Certain images from this all too short season (repeats of *Hard Labour* and *Home Sweet Home*, please) will live on in my memory: Keith Pratt, in *Nuts in May*, bullying the diffident PE teacher Ray to sing along with him and Candice Marie; the wonderfully awful dinner party given by the young stock-brokers in *Who's Who;* the grim sullenness of the Faggs' home life in *Grown Ups*. Very funny and very sad: a comic vision of the world at its most effective and profound.

ANOTHER attack against ostrich-complexes was mounted by *Living in Styal* (Granada), a four-part documentary filmed in the women's prison of that name and grim evidence that the desperation of some lives isn't always suffered with stoic resignation. The first two programmes followed the arrival and first weeks of three new inmates. One, Jenny, related a catalogue of misfortunes that make Mike Leigh's various worlds look like a rose-tinted fantasy. She had arrived in Styal leaving a three-and-a-half-month premature baby (weight 1lb 12oz) in hospital and four other kids in the care of her estranged husband. Her eldest daughter, aged eight, had been raped the year previously. Even the Deputy Governor seemed overwhelmed by this tale of woe, but Jenny – up for shop-lifting – appeared remarkably unbowed.

Styal is run like a fairly strict girls' boarding school: the tone is firm but friendly rather than authoritarian and repressive. Once again, as with the *Police* documentary, one wonders just how influential the presence of the cameras is on behaviour and attitudes. Certainly in these two programmes everyone's demeanour seemed formal and unnatural. Even when one inmate was informed of her father's death (something of an invasion of privacy, surely?), she seemed unable to take in the news, her eyes constantly darting towards the lens. It was certainly depressing viewing. We've had a glimpse under the lid, but the feeling remains that the truth isn't going to be visible. It may be that documentary, with all its paraphernalia, can gain only limited access into this kind of private, enclosed world. Paradoxically – with the example of Mike Leigh fresh in our minds – perhaps fiction remains the best way of getting to the reality. □

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FILMS: John Coleman

Gross encounters

Poltergeist (X) *Empire*
Moonlighting (AA) *The Lane; Screen on the Green*
The Nest (AA) *ICA*

Somewhere in affluent suburban America, the TV is always on and kids have more toys than Hamley's. One day a child's innocent eyes widen or glaze over, mini-robots go private walkies, the furniture prankishly re-arranges itself. Tobe Hooper, director of that creeps' delight *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre*, may be formally credited with the direction of the latest haunted-house movie, **Poltergeist,** but the thing is stamped all over with the obsessions of Steven Spielberg. And in fact Spielberg came up with the original idea, co-wrote and co-produced, was on the set throughout filming and made the final cut. Links with *Close Encounters* and the upcoming *E.T.* abound, never more so than in the central notion of child as mediator between blinkered old us and the mysteries of Out There. This time round, though, the contact is with nothing so benevolent as cute-shaped beings from other planets. The dabbling is with diabolism and the aim to shock and shock again.

Little Carol Anne (Heather O'Rourke), youngest of the three Freeling kids, hears voices in the drizzling static on a TV set in the small hours, responds and – soon after assorted poltergeist-plus manifestations promised in the title (chairs playing silly buggers, thunderstorms, a personalised earthquake, a tree that snatches her brother out through a window) – disappears. If Alice went through the looking-glass, *she* would seem to have been absorbed by the telly. Nothing so comically simple or Mary Poppins. A trio of parapsychologists, led by a straight-faced Beatrice Straight, is secretly invited to investigate (some very Tobe Hooperish nasties happen to one of these, who rapidly leaves). Finally, a midget medium (squeaky-voiced Zelda Rubinstein) turns up at Straight's last-ditch request: 'She's cleaned many houses.' Amid a devil of a clangour, this medium tries to make her message heard – lengthy nonsense about a blinding source of light and dead who are unaware they are dead – before performing a sort of rope-trick rescue from which brave mom (literally fetching Jobeth Williams) and lost daughter emerge, covered in slimy red-currant jelly. There is, however, more to come after this umbilical retrieval. Those with an advanced sense of fun may find some graveyard humour in the second twist.

Humour, as a matter of record, is what nearly saves this muddled affair – which uncontrolledly throws in just about every horrific special effect in the satanic book, from a steak mincing itself to an imploding house – for intelligent interest. The whole shebang is bracketed by two good jokes about TV and might indeed be read as a double-pronged attack on the small box: first, by making it the *sine qua non* of communication with the forces of evil; and then, of course, by being so 'big', wide-screened and done in Dolby Stereo. Some quite impish comedy lies buries beneath the accumulation of silly and expensive thrills.

JERZY Skolimowski, the maverick, roving Polish director, is back in welcome good form with **Moonlighting**, produced by that other excellent chancer, our very own Mark Shivas, and miraculously achieved – from script to a Cannes showing – in about five months. Drawing loosely on a couple of personal experiences, using his own house in Kensington for location shooting, Skolimowski invents a quartet of building workers from Poland. On one-month visas, with £1,200 in cash and ostensibly here to buy a second-hand car, they have actually been despatched by a wily boss-man in Warsaw to do up his London bolt-hole. Jeremy Irons plays the relatively sophisticated leader of this lumpish group (the other three actors are of Slavic origin, only one a genuine Pole), tormented by what is happening to his beloved wife Anna back home, quickly running out of cash, reduced to a repeated shoplifting ruse in a suspicious local supermarket and to the brazen theft of a scarf from Aquascutum, desperately trying to jolly and bully the increasingly recalcitrant trio into 18-hour days. His task is further complicated: only he knows of the military shutdown in Poland since they left. There is a grim kind of humour in his successful efforts to conceal the truth, tearing down the odd Solidarity poster, blocking them from TV and visits on Xmas Day and New Year's Eve to the Polish Church. Obviously, there are also parallels to be drawn between his changing relationship to his fellows and the bitter shifts going on in their native land.

Too much, perhaps, can be made of the metaphor. What most strongly fascinates is rather the experience of us – irritable next-door neighbour, surly builder's merchant, grudging shop assistants – seen through East European eyes: bloodshot vignettes. Then there is the mechanics of camping out in the house: an emptied party-size beer can becomes a saucepan in a twinkling, for instance. And, a true bonus, there is that streak of surrealism in the everyday that Skolimowski has proved so peculiarly his own: a scared cat with arched back, the last, long trek to the air terminal with supermarket trolleys as baggage containers. The result is fresh, barbed.

The Nest, written and directed by Jaime de Arminan, is a sly, well-turned anecdote from Spain, about a bearded and reclusive widower pushing 60, much given to conducting recorded opera and computer chess, who becomes amorously ensnared by a knowing-innocent nymphet (the extraordinary Ana Torrent of *The Spirit of the Beehive*) from the nearby village. A fine gaiety informs the best passages before the inevitable tragic fall. The 'eccentric' is endearingly played by Hector Alterio. Shades, in a complimentary sense, of Buñuel. □

JAZZ: Charles Fox

Making it up

Charlie Parker Quartet: 'Now's The Time' *Verve 2304 095*
Dizzy Gillespie Plays And Raps In His Greatest Concert *Pablo Live D2620116 (2 LPs)*

Missing the point can have a wider pertinence. The tale still circulates in British jazz circles of a couple overheard in the front stalls at a Stan Getz concert. Halfway through the second number the man treated his girl friend to an outraged whisper: 'Do you know I think the fellow is making it up as he goes along!' One can only speculate upon how that innocent would react to an LP which has Charlie Parker playing three quite different solos on the same theme. That piece happens to be a thickened-up twelve-bar blues, 'Chi-Chi', while two of the three versions are what American record companies persist in calling 'alternate takes' – by which they mean those attempts that did not get chosen when the original record was released.

Louis Armstrong was renowned in the 1920s for coming up with a totally fresh solo every time. And Parker certainly equalled Armstrong in the nonchalance with which he would lavish unique musical ideas upon 'takes' that only got issued after the saxophonist's death, when every note he blew suddenly became holy. Yet that incessant, lyrical flow was only one aspect of what, for once, it seems fair to describe as Parker's genius. There were, too, the constant rhythmic shifts, a flexibility that often made his companions appear sedate. These sessions find Parker operating with what, in 1952 and 1953, seemed the bare minimum: a quartet, but one that included Max Roach, arguably the greatest jazz drummer alive today, and either Al Haig or Hank Jones at the piano. Quite sharp company, in fact, yet it is Parker's saxophone which dominates. How odd that people should once have considered that sound strident, even ugly.

Bird lives in a very real sense whenever his records are played. Dizzy Gillespie, Parker's confederate in supplanting swing with bebop, still soldiers on, of course. Like the latterday Armstrong, he has been known to ration his trumpet playing: singing, thumping on bongoes, chatting up an audience, rather than putting too much strain on his lip. But just as there was no holding him back at Knebworth a couple of months ago, nor was there at last year's Montreux Festival, a performance now contained on this two LP album.

Gillespie, of course, has to go on living with a virtuoso style that he created over a third of a century ago. Not surprisingly, his solos dazzle less often nowadays than they did on 52nd Street in the mid-1940s. Yet they can still catch fire – and more feeling seems to creep in. Ignore the hyperbole of the album's title. What matters is the glimpse that is offered of a jazz classic in our midst and still in motion. □

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ART: John Spurling

Any old junk

Tinguely *Tate* and *Anne Berthoud Gallery, 1 Langley Court, London WC2*

Jean Tinguely has been a leading figure of the European avant-garde for the last quarter century and in particular a founder-member with Yves Klein and others of the so-called *Nouveau Réalisme,* which flourished at the beginning of the Sixties and was basically a reaction against the then fashionable abstract expressionism and tachism. Traces of this art-historically respectable Tinguely are visible, if you're looking out for them, in the Tate's exhibition. The 'metamatic', for instance, which, if you hand it coloured pencils and attach a piece of paper to its clipboard, will scribble you an abstract, was originally an instrument of *Nouveau Réaliste* propaganda as well as a child's delight. But like his compatriot Paul Klee, Tinguely is so inventive and immediately accessible that his artistic pedigree seems more than usually irrelevant. Richard Calvocoressi, who has organised the Tate's show and written its lavishly illustrated catalogue (£7.95), has wisely kept the one for entertainment and the other for instruction.

Tinguely's machines are primarily concerned, like all the best entertainers, with emotions; and he has progressed from expressing gentle aesthetic feelings – by means of soft, tinkling sounds and the elegant movement of planes, colours and lines – to releasing a gamut of far more ambivalent and less controllable ones. The turning-point is marked in this exhibition by the machine called *La Jalousie II*, a bead curtain which, when you operate the red foot-pedal, thrashes from side to side, suggesting both the shuddering, self-destructive emotion of the title (which also, of course, means a Venetian blind) and at the same time the sexually-arousing dance which might have caused it. In the next room a large patient-looking, dinosaurish creature with a stretched-out neck and curled back tail, made of rusty wheels and spars, pots and pans, a helmet and other junk, goes into action internally, with a great squeaking and intermittent banging, but does not move over the floor; while a small pram-like appendage advances unsteadily towards your foot on the start-pedal, only to be jerked back at the last moment by a bent wire. The emotion here is harder to pin down, since no word has been coined for it, but it is familiar to all keepers of children, especially mothers: the instinct to protect and restrain what is vulnerable and irresponsible compounded with considerable discomfort and irritation.

One's dawning suspicion that these machines are not so much addressed to children as in many ways remarkably like children is confirmed in the next room by a little terror called *Mautz II*, which angrily and persistently beats its plinth with a golf-ball attached to a short chain, and by a large device for swallowing rubber balls and spewing them out in all directions. At the Tate, the latter is confined in a rope cage, fed by one of the attendants and only switched on at intervals, but that sort of rationality is not usually obtainable in real life, at home.

The point is not, of course, that Tinguely is dealing with exclusively childish emotions, but that in his machines as in children the emotions are uppermost and undisguised by policy or acquired polish. Commentators have often seen him – especially in his notorious *Homage to New York*, which in 1960 destroyed itself in front of an invited audience in the Sculpture Garden of the Museum of Modern Art – as criticising, to quote one of them, 'the social order that is perfectly symbolised by the flawless, totally monotonous way machines function'. Tinguely is not so simple-minded. Some machines may function flawlessly, but social orders never do. Tinguely's machines do not criticise human beings and their creations so much as reflect and sympathise with them. Even a small piece such as *Mautz II* or *Vive la Liberté*, excitedly waving its wisp of wool on a jiggling pole, suggest pathos as well as fury or enthusiasm; and this ambiguity is still more developed in the large *Hannibal II*, which rolls forward in a stately manner along a plinth, is drawn back again, advances again, and every times it moves drags with it a long rattling chain. Graceful and clumsy, threatening and pitiful, confident and purposeless, it reminds one both of an old railway engine and of a cannon and it too has a little pram-like accessory.

In more recent works Tinguely has added skulls to the other bric-a-brac composing his machines. At the Anne Berthoud Gallery, which is showing sketches and several fairly small machines, there is a pig's skull with chomping jaws, but the Tate has an immense construction, inspired by Grünewald's Isenheim altarpiece, which incorporates several skulls, human and animal, as well as other ready-made items such as feathers, a little sentimental statue of a pious woman praying, a whirling crucifix and a broken ski. The effect is inevitably somewhat sinister, as of a black mass. But skulls and feathers, after all, are only earlier forms of machinery; and gods and devils, like governments and oppositions, are part of the same outfit. Tinguely is not satisfying religion so much as exposing the ritual emotions connected with it in all their confusion, theatricality, suggestive potency and actual inadequacy. As revealed by Tinguely we are indeed strange creatures: the efficient machines we are made of appear as symbols of death and metaphysical fear, while the emotions which animate us appear as obsessively active, complicatedly useless, sadly funny machines put together from any old junk. □

NEW STATESMAN INDEX

The index to Vol. 103 (January-June 1982) is now available, price £1.25, post free, from the publisher: 10 Great Turnstile, London WC1V 7HJ.

MUSIC: Andrew Clements

In real time

Répons *Royal Horticultural Hall/Radio 3*

Practically the only criticism one can make of the Ensemble Intercontemporain's visit to the Proms last week was its brevity; the Royal Horticultural Hall could have been filled over again with the crowds left outside for the British premiere of Boulez's *Répons*. Having prepared the performance – the electronics and computer hardware need five days for installation – it would have been sensible to have given a repeat performance. Over the past year interest in the work has been fermented by reports of a 20-minute version given in Donaueschingen and Paris last autumn; inspired by the new sound resources available to him, Boulez seemed to have rekindled some of the creative fire that had left him through the best part of two decades. Once again he was leading European music forward.

Not only Boulez's personal reputation is riding on the new work. Successive French governments have poured funds into IRCAM, the musical research institute headed by Boulez in the bowels of the Pompidou Centre, and though it has become a Mecca for composers eager to explore its unique facilities few major advances have been made public. *Répons* is intended to demonstrate the possibilities of the technology developed in the IRCAM workshops, the first repayment on the substantial political and artistic debt. For the London performance Boulez has provided a new section, making 32 minutes of music altogether. It has become another of the composer's 'works in progress'; Boulez envisages something over an hour long when complete, capable of sustaining an entire concert and justifying the enormous investment of time and resources which goes into every performance. In the Royal Horticultural Hall Boulez conducted the work twice, devoting the interval to an explanation of some of the technical devices it exploits.

Essentially *Répons* sets live, unmodulated instrumental sounds, supplied by an ensemble of 23 players, against six soloists whose timbres – xylophones and vibraphones, harp, cimbalom and pianos – can be transformed and controlled by the computer programmes. The six soloists and their attendant loudspeakers are set around the edge of the auditorium; the ensemble and conductor are in the centre backed by the phalanx of engineers who control the computer operations. The result is a continual intricate dialogue – between the ensemble and the soloists as a group, between pairs of soloists who summon each other across the hall, implicitly between the conductor and his technicians.

In the opening section of the piece – roughly seven minutes – the ensemble is heard alone, defining its own music and language, a style that will be familiar to anyone who knows the Boulez of *Rituel* and *Eclat/Multiples*, but with the propul-

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sive quality derived from repetition as in the recent set of *Notations*. The entry of the soloists is prepared in almost theatrical fashion – and the first sounds of those transformed instruments, ebbing and flowing, refracted into glinting fragments, is one of the most powerful moments in Boulez's music. As if to emphasise the public quality of the work, the events are large-scale: a furious toccata is built up first by the ensemble and taken over and magnified by the soloists; a funeral march builds to a magnificent climax, a second toccata, wilder and more exotic than the first, winds the work to its anecdotal, and temporary conclusion. There are moments when *Répons* seems to have a symphonic sweep to its development; the fallow decades which Boulez spent largely as a conductor may not have encouraged his composition directly, but now they seem to have produced a greater concern for graspable gestures, for music which presents at least some helpful signposts to its audience.

Répons is unquestionably its composer's finest work since *Pli selon pli,* more ambitious and more profound in its implications than anything written in the intervening years. There are moments in the present score when too much seems to be going on, when the ear cannot disentangle the knots of sound generated by the computer, when the glistening complexes become self-defeating. The so-called 'wallpaper music'; generated by the computer to fill in the interstices in the climactic textures, was hard to differentiate; at best it seemed a neutral white noise hardly important in the context of such a prodigally imagined work. No one would claim, not even Boulez himself, I think, that this score does any more than explore the very fringes of the territory opened up by these IRCAM computer techniques, with their extraordinary ability to work in the real time of the performance and hence to be integrated completely into the compositional process. Boulez has set himself to provide in *Répons* some preliminary thesaurus of these possibilities, and he has already done so in a richly rewarding way. □

THEATRE: Benedict Nightingale

Coming cleanish

The Rules of the Game by PIRANDELLO *Haymarket*
Stiff Options by JOHN FLANAGAN and ANDREW MCCULLOCH *Stratford East*

Pirandello isn't as often performed in our island corner as his European reputation might seem to justify, presumably because the beefy British are daunted by his philosophic enthusiasms, in particular his obsession with the nature of appearance and reality. That is a pity, since his plays are by no means as cerebral or difficult as they are sometimes held to be. Under the thinking-cap that somewhat ostentatiously covers *Six Characters in Search of an Author,* for instance, is a saga of family disaster that would probably be rejected by the authors of *Dallas* or *Dynasty* as too torrid and sensational; and the intermittent idea, the occasional abstraction, the odd reference to Bergson don't prevent **The Rules of the Game** being a triangle drama-cum-revenge thriller, with a twist in the tail, a trick ending, or however you like to describe it.

Well, all right, if the play was only a spaghetti *Murder of Roger Ackroyd* one would no more welcome its revival than if it was only a thinly dramatised version of *Matter and Memory*. It raises some general questions and stretches the mental muscles a bit; but (and this is the point) very much by and through the human and particular. If you're to enjoy the play on any level – intellectual, emotional, whatever – you must try to unravel the motives of the protagonist, Leone, whom an erratic, scattered, fickle wife has driven into genteel isolation. To what extent is he deluding himself and others, to what extent wearing a Pirandellian mask and playing a Pirandellian part when he claims to have found the perfect defence against pain in an absolute indifference to everything and everyone? Is it because he's passively permitted events to take their course, in accordance with this creed of his, that his wife's lover, and not he, ends up fighting a duel with the expert swordsman who has supposedly insulted her? Or has he slyly engineered the wretched man into a deathtrap? Is he a human void, a murderously jealous husband, or some biologically improbable blend of the two?

Every actor must decide on his own answer to these questions, and he is perfectly entitled to make it an ambiguous one, leaving us and even himself in some doubt of what he really feels and means. Pirandello does, after all, anticipate Pinter in the spaces he invisibly constructs between the lines, the room he allows for nuance, suggestion and uncertainty; and in Leonard Rossiter's great armoury of skills there is the ability to be interestingly, indeed arrestingly opaque. Accordingly, there's just the tiniest hint of a threat when this Leone mildly remarks that his status as husband 'ought occasionally to be borne in mind', and just the slightest touch of bitterness when he speaks of those aspects of his wife's personality he still likes to remember. Mainly, Rossiter cultivates a bleak, wry, weary and wary look deliberately calculated to keep us guessing. And guess we keep doing.

Not until the very end does Rossiter come clean or, rather, cleanish. He gives us a glimpse of those wild internal beasts which Leone claims to have tamed but which are surely still gnawing at his bowels and driving him towards revenge. Yet even then we can't be entirely sure they are. What was really going on inside this Leone as he stood and stared out at us? Was it fanciful to see something baleful in that quarter-smile, something not quite sane in the white-yellow slant of those eyes, and (as if to take up the appalled accusation his wife actually directs at him) something vaguely satanic in those stooped shoulders and that black face of his? Was Rossiter just wondering how much applause he'd get when the curtain fell, or dreaming of the cup of Ovaltine waiting for him at home? All I can report is, first, that he successfully put me in mind of Pascal's dictum about the heart having reasons which reason does not know; second, that he frightened the hell out of me.

It's a performance that somehow manages to defy consistency by being at once low-key and high-octane and seems in itself reason enough for seeing Anthony Quayle's capable if sometimes over-staid production. Stephan Chase makes an excessively sleepy lover, and Mel Martin's wife is a bit too much the butterfly and too little the wasp, effective enough when fluttering about in itchy exasperation at her maddening husband, less so when she's gathering herself to give him a killer-sting. As for **Stiff Options,** well, it's trad northern farce given the odd, unexpected twist. The villain is an avaricious mortician forever dreaming of mega-death or, as he'd call it, mega-demise; the comic female heavy is a burly women's libber: the hero a wan hit-man from London. I laughed at the sub-Ortonesque cavortings of Bryan Pringle, Pat Keen, Michael Elphick et al; but not quite enough. □

WEEKEND COMPETITION

No 2737 **Set by Robin Chase**

Tell the story of any Greek or other myth or legend in up to five newspaper headlines.

No 2734 **Set by Ned Blatherskite**

Odes to Autumn in the style of any modern poet.

Report **By Clive Tolstoy**

Many Betjemans; many Thribbs. No really convincing Larkin, Hughes or Heaney – too much reliance on the rather obvious pathos of, respectively, dead leaves, bitter birds and mounds of dung. Not all was gloom however. I liked especially George Simmers' dead-on Porter and Pat Simeoni's heart-breaking Linton Kwesi Johnson. Wellingtons to those printed.

John Betjeman
'Packing Susan off to Bedales
(Problem daughter, *entre nous*),
Touching up the sun-lounge paintwork,
Clearing spiders from the loo –

'Autumn's such a busy time, dear,
(Try this pippin – it's a beaut);
Madge is putting on a slide-show
At the Women's Institute.

'Gets quite nippy now, by tea-time;
Mornings, you can see your breath . . .'
In the park, the smell of bonfires,
At The Home, the smell of death.

STANLEY J. SHARPLESS

Sylvia Plath
I've got your number, Autumn,
You're fat with fog and rotting vegetables.
After your gross ministrations
Pumpkins and sweet hazelnuts

Bloat like pregnant women or corpses.
At the first whiff of your cidery breath
Bees stagger back to their clammy cells;
Swallows pack their bags.

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But don't think of pink-faced Spring –
I've a perverse yen for you, Autumn.
You're John the Baptist
To clean, icy, dead Winter.

PETER NORMAN

Peter Porter

The Creative Heads having insisted
That this year Autumn will be classical,
Your tense moon must govern a silver age
And flowers made brittle as bone.
Lawns with the texture of New Painting
Must bow to Augustan Rollers. The wind
Hums arias of disappointment. Consumption
Harvests the talent till the *beau monde*
Is safe for Social Democracy. An Australian
Peering through Art Deco blinds prefers
Vivaldi to the real thing, and promises
A random cat he'll fix him in perspex verses
Whose bottom line is always Death.

GEORGE SIMMERS

E. J. Thribb

So, greetings, Autumn!
Incidentally the Americans
call you the Fall.
Where does that
name come from?
Keith's mum says
pride comes before
a Fall. Which is
odd because
summer usually
does. If we
have one that is.

DAVID TOLEY

Linton Kwesi Johnson

Autumn you is a bitch
der is no escapin it.
Autumn you is a bitch
you is a mangey crit.

Winter will soon strangle she.
Wid snow ridin on a bare tree,
twigs an branches across der sky
map out der arteries of days dat die.

Grey-veiled Autumn why is you weepin?
From electric hour of the red bulb creepin?
Late sun is staining der brain wid blood flow.
You watch and grieve for der warmth dat
dung go.

Dread beat bleedin heat an loss, goh dung
summer days –
dread beat heavy pulsing farwud, ganja thin
haze . . .

PAT SIMEONI

Craig Raine

Withered like a kukried chieftain's store
of balls, the onions on the garage door.

Pink foetuses in jars the pears she pickles,
and for the freezer's tomb tinfoil that prickles

she mummy-wraps around the Pharaoh marrow.
I am the fellah toiling with the barrow:

stacked wheels of sunflowers, corpses
everywhere,
formaldehyde of Autumn in the air;

a church smell out of doors, a green room
sharp with the old year's greasepaint and
perfume.

As if the birds meant to be no returning,
leaves like their letters are piled up for burning.

Home-made soon, like 'new programmes' on
the screen,
a chutney from tomatoes small and green.

GEORGE MOOR

TAKING PART

John McVicar

Turning public broadcasting

THE MAGAZINE for the recent *Edinburgh International TV Festival* had a picture on the cover of a guinea pig perched on a movable TV stand. It was intended to symbolise the theme of the festival – television in transition as it adapts to the experiments in satellite and cable. Perhaps a chicken would have been more appropriate because everyone – the City, the government, television programme-makers and administrators, not least journalists – are getting in a flap about cable.

The present tizzy over cable derives from the government's proposals to wire up about half the country over the next five years. By then, along with the six on-air channels (and the two satellite channels planned for 1986) those who take cable will also have the option on a pay basis of ten or more other channels – not general ones but specialist channels carrying sport, movies, news, soft porn (sex without insertions), weather, 'what's on' etc.

It really started last July when a government 'think tank' on information technology realised that monetarism had destroyed not only the industrial base of the country but also the Tory party's electoral prospects. At that time, of course, nobody could have anticipated that Argentinian incompetence at fusing bombs would turn that electoral tide. Anyway the idea was sown in the government's head that a national cable network was the way to solve Britain's industrial problems.

The government also bought the idea that the cabling of Britain would have to be 'entertainment-led'. What this means, as the Minister of Technology argued at Edinburgh, is that in order to make the cabling of Britain an attractive investment, the cable companies must be allowed to produce and sell TV programmes untrammelled by the public service ideals of broadcasting.

This 'deregulation' was a dominant issue in Edinburgh and tends to figure prominently in press coverage of cable. One of the ironies was the number of radical programme-makers, originally in the vanguard of challenging the IBA and BBC's regulatory role, who were clamouring for the retention of public service ideals. However, the set-piece address of the festival, the MacTaggart Lecture given by Ted Turner, did make even the electronic publishing school – 'TV should be like the magazine or book industry' – falter.

Ted Turner is a 44-year-old Ohian millionaire who is sometimes called 'the Cable Cowboy'. He is deregulation personified. Originally in the billboards business, he told his audience in a Texan drawl how he bought a 'Mickey Mouse station' in Atlanta in the '70s because TV was an 'exciting and important communication device. And one other reason I wanted to get into television was that I always liked old movies.' The packed audience, reared on a scholarly diet of John Mortimer ('80) and Peter Jay ('81), were painfully aware that this Southern hick rambling away without notes and, seemingly, ideas could be the cable future. Mind you, one thing Ted Turner had done which they hadn't was to get rich out of TV.

One way he made his Atlanta station profitable was to find a loophole in one of the regulations applied by the US Federal Communications Commission. He put the mandatory 40 minutes news programme out at 3a.m.! And he's not stupid. When an English reporter asked him what he'd do if his rivals retaliated by putting on entertainment programmes in the conventional 6p.m. news slot, he replied: 'Then I'd put on the news, you dummy. That's why England's in so much trouble. Nobody's got any brains over there any more.'

After consolidating his Atlanta operation Turner saw the potential of satellite, which led to his 'superstation that serves the nation' – a cable channel which he sells to hundreds of other US cable operators. He also buys his programming at *local* rates but, since he broadcasts nationally, charges advertisers national rates. Last year his station made a profit of £12 million.

Explaining the secret of his success he said that he was a typical American. And he recognised some blood brothers at the conference because, as he told us, he'd never seen so many people who 'like money so much. Every guy I've been talking to wants to get money some kind of way. You know I always thought this was a nice socialist country where everybody wanted to give their money away to the poor and help out the Empire.'

American TV is a stream of sanitised pap because it's an advertising medium for consumerism. US cable with its dirge of popular movies, soft porn, recycled soap operas, porn, sport and disco news is, artistically, even worse. There isn't any evidence that UK cable will do any better. The only consolation for the standards preservers is that our lowest common denominator probably stands a little higher than even the Ted Turners can drag it. Yet as one Tory MP, Geoffrey Johnson Smith, kept reminding the conference, if the UK public want '*Coronation Street* and *Crossroads*, as the viewing figures show they do, then what right have we to deny it to them?'

And the reason why freedom of choice does always raise itself in the cable debate is that it is inherent in the technology of cable. Indeed, once cable gains a foothold in a capitalist society I doubt if it can be contained inside a Reithian broadcasting framework. But why get in a lather about it? If our TV becomes unwatchable, there's always the wisdom of Ted Turner: 'I really feel like the less television you watch the better off you are. I mean I really don't like television. I think the more time you spend reading a good book the better off you are.' □

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17-25 Sept

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FRI 17 SEPT

LETCHWORTH, HERTS. 'Labour's Programme 1982' – Michael Meacher MP, 8pm. 50p. Brotherhood Hall, Gernon Rd.
17-19 SEPTEMBER. SHEFFIELD. A.C.W. Conference – 'Community Health Issues'. 60 workshops. Food, accommodation, creche, entertainment. Details: Victoria Grandon **0742 77870.**
17-19 SEPT. READING. CND Activists Training Weekend. £8. Registration details from Lindy Chatting, Reading CND, P.O. Box 158, Reading, Berks.
KENDAL. Joan Lestor at Kendal L.P. meeting. 7.30 p.m. Kirkland Hall.

SAT 18 SEPT

ARDROSSAN. Day school 'Third World Development'. Speaker – Frank McElhone, MP. 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Resources Centre.
LONDON SE1. Conference. Women's Campaign for Jobs. 11 a.m. County Hall.
18-19 SEPTEMBER LONDON WC1. Socialist Economic Review Conference. Reg. £7 (£3.50 u/w). 10.30-5. University of London Union, Malet St. **Tel: 01-249 4358 or 219-4443.**
HASTINGS. Unveiling of Robert Tressell Mural Panel and celebration of "The Ragged-Trousered Philanthropists". 4.30-6pm. Falaise Hall. £1. (50p u/w). **Tel: 01-690 1291.**
LONDON SE7. 3rd Greenwich Women's Day. Workshops, stalls, theatre, food, creche. Charlton House, Charlton Rd., 9.30-5.30.
LONDON E8. Benefit for E. London Troops Out Movement. Live music, bar, bookstall. £1.50 (£1 u/w). Hackney Labour & Trades Union Hall, 96 Dalston Lane. 8pm.

MON 20 SEPT

LONDON NW5 Marxism, introductory course. Controversies in Contemporary Marxism; Britain in the 30's. Starts w/c 20 Sept. Camden Institute, Holmes Rd. **01-267 1414.**
20-22 SEPT. CROYDON. Dance Tales presents 'Sticks & Stones'. 7.30pm. Croydon Warehouse Theatre, 62 Dingwall Road. £2.50. **Tel: 01-680 4060.**

TUES 21 SEPT

LEICESTER. 'Councillors Forum on Nuclear Free Zones'. Leicester CND. 7.30 p.m. Friends Meeting House, Queens Road.
LONDON E14. 'Extra-Parliamentary Activity' – Audrey Wise. Tower Hamlets Fabian Soc. Museum of Labour History, Limehouse Town Hall, Commercial Rd.
LONDON, SW1. 'The Free Media and its Enemies'. Speakers include – Charles Wintour, Peter Osnos, Michel Tatu, Graham Murdoch. Martin Walker in the Chair. 7.30 p.m. ICA, The Mall. **Tel: 01-930 3647.** £1.25.
LONDON WC1. Start of 10 sessions on 'Improving Personal Relationships'. Adlerian Society, Community Rooms, Millman St. **Tel: 01-789 8086.**

WED 22 SEPT

LONDON W1. Dr. G. T. Martin lectures on ancient Egypt 'Saggara'. 6 p.m. Egyptian Education Bureau, 4 Chesterfield Gardens.
LONDON WC1. Course – 'Community in Urban Society' relevant to Soc. Workers & Comm. Wkrs. begins. **Tel: Margherita Vietri on 01-636 8000.** Univ. of London, Dept. Extra-Mural Studies.
LONDON N1. Debate: Israel & Palestine. Daniel Janner & Moshe Machover 8 p.m. Room 4, Town Hall, Upper St.
LONDON W2. 'Hard Luck'. Westminster CND Public Meeting. Spkrs include Ken Livingstone. 7.30 p.m. Porchester Hall, Porchester Rd. **Tel: 01-969 5618 or 405 7505.**

THURS 23 SEPT

CROYDON. Scarlet Harlets present 'We Who Were Beautiful'. 7.30 p.m. £2.50 (£1.50 u/w). Warehouse Theatre, 62 Dingwall Rd. **01-680 4060.**
LONDON WC1. Concert – Chilean Music. 7 p.m. Camden Centre, Bidborough St.
LONDON SW11. Wandsworth W.E.A. 'Issues in Nuclear Armament & Disarmament.' Spkrs. incl. Dan Smith. 7.30 p.m. Thursdays until 4 Nov. Garfield Community Centre, Garfield Rd. **Tel: 01-352 7691.**
LONDON NW1. Association of Qualitative Research Practitioners seminar. Speaker Prof. H. J. Eysenck, on the subject of creativity. £12 members. £15 non-members. 10.30 a.m. London Business School, Sussex Place. **01-431 1263.**
RICHMOND, SURREY. 4th William Cardwell Memorial Lecture by Denis Healey – 'Why Britain Needs a Labour Government' 8 p.m. Richmond Town Hall. **Tel: 0642 723160.**
BOURNEMOUTH. Anti-Nuclear Campaign fringe meeting at Liberal Party Assembly. 8 p.m. West Cliff Hall Hotel, West Cliff. **Tel: 0742-754691.**
23-24 SEPT., LONDON SW7. Symposium on 'Developments in Human Reproduction and their Eugenic, Ethical Implications.' Lecture hall of Royal Geographical Soc., Kensington Gore. Free tickets from The Gen. Secretary, Eugenics Soc., 69 Eccleston Square, London, SW1V 1PJ.

FRI 24 SEPT

KENDAL. John Silkin 'Future of the Labour Party' 7.30 p.m. Kirkland Hall.

SAT 25 SEPT

MANCHESTER. 'Foreign Policy Implications of British Nuclear Disarmament', Dayschool at Withington Adult Education Centre, Mauldeth Rd., M14. 10am-4pm. Details: 59 Tintern Ave., Manchester M20 8ND.
BLACKPOOL. 'Unemployment – who pays the price?' Labour Conference Fringe Meeting. Judith Hart, Rodney Bickerstaffe, Barbara Switzer, Ruth Lister, Jo Richardson. 7.30 p.m. Opera House Foyer, Winter Gardens. CPAG.
LONDON W8. Conference. 'Tobacco and the 3rd World'. 10 a.m. Commonwealth Institute, Kensington High St. **01-603 4535.**
25-26 SEPT. YORK. Beyond The Fragments Weekend Meeting. Details – Hetti Startup, 91 Addison Gardens, London, W14 0DR. **01-602 1815.**

FORTHCOMING

26 SEPT. BLACKPOOL. Labour Conference Fringe Meeting. 'The Fight Against Tory Transport Policy & the Socialist Alternative'. 3 p.m. Carlton hotel.
26 SEPT. BLACKPOOL. Meeting – Labour Solidarity Campaign. Jim Callaghan, Roy Hattersley, Peter Shore, Betty Boothroyd. Spanish Room, Winter Gardens. **01-722 9253.**
MONDAYS FROM 27 SEPT. LONDON WC1. Course – 'Black Women in Contemporary Literature'. Details – Information Officer, Dept. Extra-Mural Studies, 26 Russell Sq., London WC1.
28 SEPT LEICESTER. Public debate on 'Nuclear Weapons & Disarmament'. Peter Wright (CND) and Maurice Keen-Soper (SDP). 7.30 p.m. Friends Meeting Hse., Queens Rd.
28 SEPT. BLACKPOOL. Labour Conference Fringe meeting 'The Medical Effects of Nuclear Weapons'. Chair – Bob Cryer MP. Spkrs. – Prof. Eric Easson, Dr. Pat Troop, Dr. Neill Simpson. 8 p.m. Claremont Hotel, 270 North Promenade.
UNTIL 8 OCTOBER, LONDON NW5. 'Summer Madness'. Exhibition of textile hangings by Trinidadian artist Althea McNish. Peoples Gallery, 73 Prince of Wales Rd., Kentish Town. Closed Suns. and Mons.
TUESDAYS till 30 NOVEMBER, LONDON EC3. Lunchtime talks 1.10 p.m. on progress of BILLINGSGATE EXCAVATION. 25p. Public Viewing Gallery, Lower Thames Street. Public viewing daily.
2 OCTOBER, SHEFFIELD. 'Defence Policies in the '80s' 9.30 a.m.-4 p.m. Dayschool – speakers include April Carter, Anthony Arblaster, John Field, Phil Asquith, Mary Kaldor. At Bow Centre. **0742-322690.**
2 OCTOBER, SHEFFIELD. 'The Peace Movement after the Falklands' Public meeting. Speakers include E. P. Thompson, Kate Soper, Richard Carbon MEP, Jean McCrindle. 7.30 p.m. City Hall. **0742-615388.**
4 OCTOBER. LONDON W1. 'A Social Democratic Interpretation of History' – Peter Clarke. History Workshop seminar. 6.45 p.m., Upstairs at the 'Black Horse', 6 Rathbone Place.
30 OCTOBER. WEMBLEY. International Conference on Active Birth. Details: Active Birth Movement, 32 Cholmeley Crescent, London N6 5JR. Tel: **01-348 4636.**
5-6 NOVEMBER, LONDON WC1. Fifth Socialist Book Fair. Complete display of socialist, radical and trade union literature. (Details of stands, etc. Tel: Bookmarks 01-802 6145.) Camden Town Hall, Euston Road.
5-9 NOVEMBER, SHEFFIELD. History Workshop 16. Subjects inc. Sexual Politics, the State, Peace Movements, People's History. Speakers – Raphael Samual, Sheila Rowbotham, Royden Harrison, Anna Davin. Sheffield City Poly, Pond St. site. **0742 615388.**
6 NOVEMBER, LONDON SW1. 'Stop Sizewell B' Rally and conference. Speakers – David Ennals MP, Arthur Scargill, Ken Cameron, Colin Sweet, Dr Don Arnott. 11 a.m.-4 p.m. Central Hall, Westminster. **0742-754691.**

Sorry, but we can't accept entries over the phone. Entries must be received by Friday preceding issue date. We reserve the right to exclude items without giving reasons and are not responsible for errors. Space is strictly limited so if you definitely want your item to appear, we suggest you book it as an ad. under the appropriate classified heading. See main heading for rates, etc.

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ARE YOU a lively minded individual, aged 18-80, enjoying the arts, discussions, conferences, communications, rambles, dancing? The Progressive League caters for Mind, Body and Intellectual Stimulus. And it's so cheap. Ring 01-452 8358.

ASIAN MALE, mid-forties, University Lecturer, wishes meet broad-minded, caring woman. Box 4669.

ATTRACTIVE, INTELLIGENT, fantastic female sought by tall, 40s, friendly male, one-parent family, (Northern author/TV director). Failing perfection, will settle for amiable earthling who can count and laugh. Some experience desirable. Box 4747.

ATTRACTIVE DIVORCEE – green eyes, brown hair, with warm, sympathetic nature, 36. Interests: Music, badminton, yoga, foreign travel. Watford. Box 4739.

AUDIENCES WANTED: (London). Octogenarian going strong after severe Arthritis – poetry/song/reminiscence. Box 4731.

BLACK MAN, 35, tall, intelligent, affluent, clean, discreet, seeks sexy, fun-loving lady, 25-50, for uncomplicated relationship. Box 4718.

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CAMBRIDGE: FEMALE graduate (34), seeks academic male to establish book-filled home. Box 4710.

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COPS GAZETTE really breaks the mould of British politics, law and press by doing their job viz naming semi-household names etc. The named ones are mute of malice, prizes if replies can be prized out of them. CG is for psychological freedom from self, nanny-figures, tablets (medicinal and others), fear and all man-made divisions of life and living, only then can love be. CG writes of the official smash-up of a family, usurption of house, trumped up charges, wrongful imprisonment, repeated attempts to have its editor certified insane. There are – happily – no corpses and, unhappily, very little sex in its columns, hence the lack of interest by the professional mourners and media mediums. Donations welcome. See other lineage ad in this column.

COPS GAZETTE names MPs, lawyers, police officers, judges, etc, who aid and abet crime. Please send 9" x 4" SAE for your copy to its editor/Parliamentary candidate (Merton-Mitcham, Luton): Jiten Bardwaj, 4 Broad Green Wood, Bayford, Hertford, Herts.

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HAMPSTEAD MAN, tall, vaguely academic, many attractive features, usual cultural interests, seeks similar lady, 30s. Interesting letters answered. Box 4758.

HISTORIAN, 34, Sheffield, seeks articulate, petite female, for partnership of equals. Box 4727.

HOME-LOVING MAN, professional job, West Midlands, seeks sensitive woman. Guardian reader, world peace, Mahler, wine, gardening, walking. Box 4748.

INDEPENDENT, SOPHISTICATED lady, requires companionship gentleman, 60+, having held high position. Box 4728.

INTERESTING, MIDDLE-AGED gentleman, with some commitments, seeks companionship of similar lady. London SE. Box 4749.

INTUITIVE, THOUGHTFUL, warm-hearted woman, 37, (post-grad. Psychology), humorous, sincere, attractive (I think), trying for understanding of self and others, deep love and shared fun. Seeks man as friend, lover or more. Box 4732.

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LADY, 30s, with 8-year-old daughter, seeks male companion whose interests include music, literature, a love of the countryside and who appreciates home cooking. Must be fond of dogs! Box 4766.

LITERARY LADY socialist, 38, Midlands, seeks witty, caring comrade. No Tories. Box 4725.

LONDON LECTURER, 44, seeks shapely, socialist woman, for social activities, cinema, theatre. Box 4612.

LONDON MALE 23, varied interests, sense of humour, seeks friendly female. Box 4756.

MALE (30), ENJOYS HOUSEWORK, seeks marriage (role-reversed?) to feminist-minded female. Box 4681.

MAN FROM Orient, handsome, seeks female for love and marriage. Box 4759.

MAN, 38, single, seeks girlfriend, not afraid of sexual love. All answered. Box 4755.

MAN, 33, seeks sexy, fun-loving, older woman. Box 4711.

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SRI LANKAN male, British National, 42, professional, own house, car, many interests, seeks educated lady, for stable relationship. Box 4735.

TALL, SLIM, Indian professional man, wishes to meet educated, attractive lady. Box 4730.

TALL, SLIM, young man, Manchester region, needs fun woman with serious side. Box 4754.

UNAPPRECIATED HUSBAND, fifty, slim, attractively and intelligently sexy, seeks friendly female, any age, for occasional meetings and fun. Box 4738.

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WIDOWER, 60, independent, active with literary interests, pipe smoker, own home/car, seeks friendship with understanding younger woman. Box 4767.

WOMAN (29), seeks friendship and marriage, with caring man, 30-40. Box 4742.

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